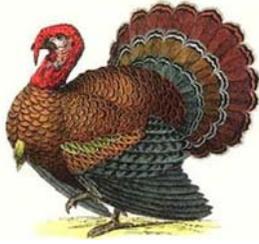


The Holiday Feast Disaster

or

(The Application of the Principles of ICS to the Holiday Feast).

This article is adopted from an exercise conducted by PPBI in a September 2004 DRJ workshop.



No, it's not the Who's of Whoville preparing for the holiday. It's your family at its normal, chaotic, frenetic best.

Your household is a beehive of activity. Everything is decorated for your holiday—the mantle over the fireplace, the entry door, the windows, the dining table. Everyone is eagerly anticipating the arrival of all the friends and relatives. It's the only time of the year the house is really full. Holiday music is roaring out of the stereo, and even Dad is singing along.

Refreshments are iced down. The kitchen is in chaos. The sink is full of pots and pans needing washing. The teen-agers are texting one another and sitting in the same room. The phone is ringing off the hook. The smells of food are wafting throughout the house. The chairs are arranged around the dining room table, which is set with the china and silver not used since the last holiday. The TV room has been completely re-arranged to seat

the maximum number to watch the holiday football game.

In other words, everything is completely normal.

Getting Organized:

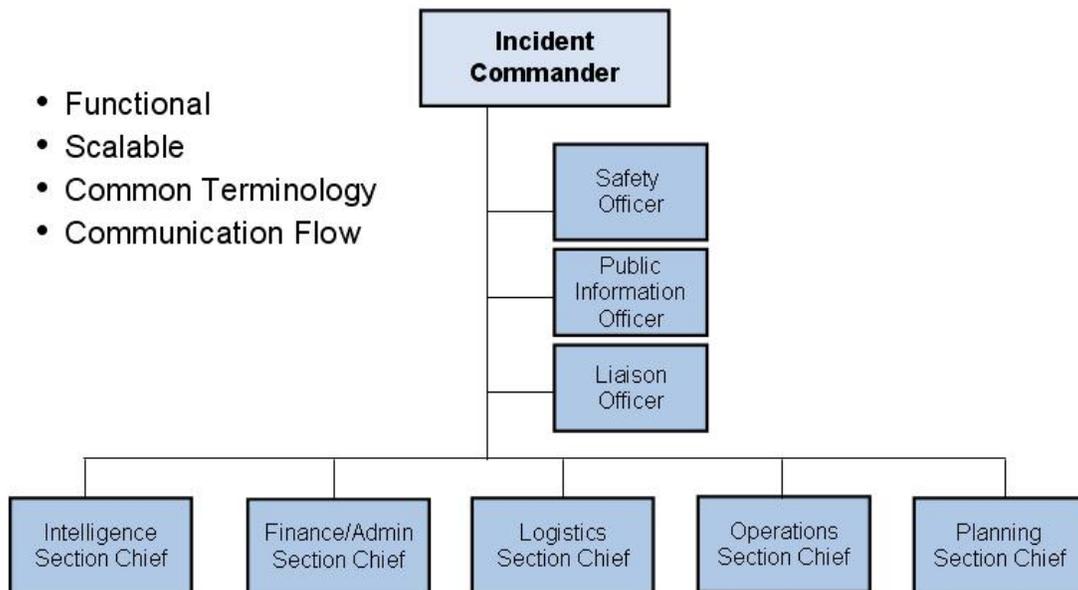
In order to plan such a feast, there are a lot of basic organizational activities that have to take place. We have a partial list, but are sure that you can easily add to the list:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| • Invite the guests | • Answer telephone |
| • Make grocery list | • Take pictures/video |
| • Go shopping | • Sharpen the knives |
| • Pay for food | • Serve drinks |
| • Cook bird | • Say grace |
| • Prepare dessert | • Serve dinner |
| • Prepare side dishes | • Clear table |
| • Take phone calls | • Serve dessert |
| • Set Up tables and chairs | • Clear table |
| • Get china out of upstairs closet | • Get TV ready for Big Game |
| • Wash china. | • Put food away |
| • Set table | • Wash dishes |
| • Arrange table seating- who goes where | • Put dishes away |
| • Make snacks for game | • Assign seats for the game |
| • Greet guests at door | • Snacks for the game |

We already know that Mom and Grandma can't do it all, and of course it just wouldn't be fair. So the question comes, how can we distribute the tasks fairly and equitably?

Since this dilemma faces every family hosting a large holiday feast, wouldn't it be nice if we could apply some organization and structure to these assignments. Well, it just happens such a structure exists. It's well defined, and called the Incident Command System. (ICS)

This diagram shows the basic structure, and most tasks fall into one or more of the boxes shown in this typical ICS structure.



(From the Business Continuity Planning Review, DRI International, and FEMA Emergency Management Institute)

What is the Incident Command System?

- The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized methodology for dealing with an event that threatens normal business operations. PPBI teaches application of ICS to your organization's crisis management team. At DRJ Spring World in Orlando, we will be teaching this workshop once again.
- There is no correlation between the ICS organization and the administrative structure of any particular department or division. Confusion over different titles or organization structures has been a significant stumbling block to effective incident management in the past.

What are the benefits of using the Incident Command System?

- Scalable – can be used for a small, localized event, or a large disaster
- Common language -- standardized nomenclature and hierarchy that will be understood by external agencies
- Delegation – as an incident grows, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performance of certain activities to other technical experts
- Transition -- Allows for transition of authority when a more qualified person arrives, or for handoff in longer incidents.
- Hotwash meetings – after an incident, all members of the Emergency Management Team should meet and reviews the ICS implementation, looking for lessons learned or things which need improvement.

What are the Team Roles and Responsibilities of the Incident Command System?

This table shows some of the basic roles. Any not pre-defined can be assigned by the Incident Commander as the need arises.

<p>Command (<i>Incident Commander</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for Overall Incident Management (manages) • Facilitates Team Meetings • Coordinates EMT Functional Operations • Facilitates Team Decisions (tie breaker) • Establishes Branches of the System (if necessary) 	<p>Liaison (<i>Tea and Sympathy</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as a spokesperson for the EMT by: • Establishing and Maintaining Contacts • Keeping Contacts Updated Appropriately • Relaying Concerns to Incident Commander
<p>Operations (<i>Stop, Start, Fix It</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Fixes" the problem (does) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishes divisions • determines the need for technical experts • mitigates future problems • Requests resources from Logistics • Keeps IC informed about situation and resources • Sets up staging area 	<p>Planning & Intelligence (<i>Anticipation</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks ahead (plans) about such things as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs for relief staff, alternate space, decontamination • What will be our recovery plan? • What will be our demobilization plan? • Collects, evaluates, manages, and disseminates information • Supervises documentation / updates
<p>Logistics (<i>gets ... "Mom" Jobs</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides people, facilities and "things" for operations • Includes Management of Communications, First Aid Supplies, Sanitation and Feeding for Incident Staff • Transportation 	<p>Finance (<i>Show Me the Money</i>)</p> <p>Deals with all financial and contractual issues (pays) such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of Goods and Services • Contracts for Additional Staff • Overtime • Workers Compensation • Insurance Settlements
<p>Safety (<i>Reduce Need for Band Aids</i>)</p> <p>Watches out for (and intervenes if necessary) to protect the safety of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident Command Staff and Operational Personnel • Neighbors, Visitors, and "Others" <p>By:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Operational Plans and Activities • Remain vigilant during a crisis • Observance of Human Health Needs (Environment, Food, Fluids, Rest, etc.). 	<p>Public Information (<i>Party Line for the Media</i>)</p> <p>Provides official media and internal communications by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing facts • Making and maintaining media contacts • Telling the company's story • Establishing a media/photo area (controlling access)

Now We're Organized

If you take a few minutes and assign each of our Holiday Feast tasks to an ICS functional area, you'll rapidly see how the day gets organized, in a simple and efficient manner. Every task has a responsible person. Everyone knows who should be doing what. Things really start falling into place.

One by one the tasks are checked off, or at least marked with a real "in-progress" status. Nothing is really left to chance.

That is, until the problems arise.

"What? Problems?" you ask! "I don't see any problems!" Oh wait, just as sure as little boys get sick eating the green apples stolen from the neighbor's tree, the problems will show up. The optimist will see them as opportunities. Here are some of them we've experienced. We're sure you can think of many more:

Your Opportunities:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Heavy Snowstorm in progress | • Forgot to get dinner rolls |
| • Can't get car out | • Aunt Ginny had one too many |
| • Potatoes burned | • National Election discussion begins |
| • Toilet backs up-floods bathroom | • \$\$ needed for more dinner rolls- no cash |

- Not enough chairs
- Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions present
- Kids fighting upstairs
- Cat's on the table after the turkey
- Grandma burns her hand
- Feuding relatives
- Cousin Joe is a lefty
- Homeless person at door seeking

handout

- Out of paper towels.
- What, No cranberry sauce?

After you've gone through the exercise of assigning the "normal" tasks to the functional representatives of the ICS team, this list becomes a snap. The exercise of using the ICS organization outside the scope of the crisis makes handling the crisis much, much easier. You are developing and exercising the same skill set you'll need when the crisis strikes—even the surprise ones that didn't show up on our opportunities list.

Notice also, that by exercising the ICS with small, mini-crises, by getting comfortable with the roles and responsibilities in easy-to-manage bites, by learning how to use the ICS organization until you become comfortable, using this structure becomes second nature.

You start to look at large catastrophes as a collection of small, mini-crises. Viola! The holiday feast is a roaring success.

Bon Appétit!

- Flour has mealworms.
- Last minute drop ins- 6 more guests
- Power failure
- Beth is now a Vegan
- TV Cable goes out

