

FIREHOUSE®

Weekly Drill

DRILL #58: FUNCTIONS WITHIN PLANNING

Introduction

The planning section is managed by the Planning Section Chief (PSC), who is a member of the General Staff. As the PSC, this individual is responsible for the collection, evaluation and dissemination of information on the development of the incident. In addition to all the other responsibilities, one of the main responsibilities of the PSC is that of the safety and welfare of all personnel working within the section.

There are three main areas the PSC needs to be concerned with. The first is having a good understanding of the current situation. The second is to predict probable courses of events of the incident. And the third is preparing alternative strategies and control operations for the incident.

The main task of the PSC is to supervise the preparation of the Incident Action Plan (IAP), determine the needed specialized resources and, if requested, assemble strike teams and task forces not assigned to the operations. A key element of this position is to predict the potential of the incident and assemble information on alternative strategies.

Other plans that fall within the PSC's responsibilities and that need to be incorporated in the IAP are traffic, medical, communications and a site-safety plan. The PSC will also oversee the implementation of the Incident Demobilization Plan. Lastly, the PSC will maintain a Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214).

To assist the PSC with this monumental task are a staff of highly trained individuals who head up subsectors. These subsectors are the Resource Unit Leader, the Situation Unit Leader, the Documentation Unit Leader, the Demobilization Unit Leader and the Technical Specialist.

The Resources Unit Leader is in charge of maintaining the status of all assigned resources operating at an incident. This is achieved by using a check-in area for all resources responding. Additionally, this person will maintain a status record-keeping system indicating current location and status of all resources.

The Situation Unit Leader will collect, process and organize all incident information taking place within the situ-



ation unit. A key function will be to prepare the Incident Status Summary (ICS Form 209). Additional items provided are photographic services and maps. He is also required to maintain a Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214).

The Documentation Unit Leader maintains accurate and up-to-date incident files. This information will be kept on file should any legal issues arise. Also these files can be used for analytical and historical purposes. All official forms will be reviewed for their accuracy and completeness. A Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214) will also be maintained.

The Demobilization Unit Leader develops the Incident Demobilization Plan detailing specific responsibilities. He ensures all Sections/Units understand their responsibilities and will maintain a ICS Form 214 (Unit/Activity Log).

The Technical Specialist brings to the incident specific knowledge and/or expertise on functions identified by the planning section. A Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214) will also be maintained.

An Operational Period Planning Cycle "P" is used to assist the PSC and his staff.

—Prepared by Russell Merrick