

ELLIOT LAKE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

POLICY ROUNDTABLES

Roundtable 1: Issues relating to the conduct and management of an emergency response.

1) IMS related issues

- a. How can Incident Management System be made more understandable, simpler and still achieve its purposes?

The Incident Management System for Ontario Doctrine was developed by Office of Fire Marshal and Emergency Management with stakeholders' input through a Steering Committee, representing a wide variety of more than thirty (30) associations, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, ministries and emergency response entities. The development of the doctrine provides a province-wide incident management system that respects and incorporates the unique structures and relationships that exist within Ontario, while ensuring that the system would also be consistent with other systems practised in neighbouring states, and provinces.

The intention of the doctrine *is a codification of beliefs or a body of teachings or instructions, taught principles or positions, as the body of teachings in a branch of knowledge or belief system.*¹ The Incident Management System, Steering Committee empowered several functional Working Groups to develop resources to support IMS:

- Training Working Group,
- Communication Working Group,
- Resource Management Working Group, and
- Emergency Operations Centre Working Group.

The Steering Committee also recognized that emergency sectors have unique needs. To support sector specific IMS implementation, a number of IMS Sector specific Working Groups have been developed:

- Emergency Medical Services Sector Working Group,
- Health Sector Working Group,
- Fire Sector Working Group, and
- Police Sector Working Group.

It is recommended that IMS users need to participate in the following IMS training curriculum:

<u>CODE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>LENGTH</u>	<u>DELIVERY</u>
IMS 100	Introduction to Incident Management System	0.5 days	Classroom & Online
IMS 200	Basic Incident Management System	1.5 days	Classroom
IMS 250	Incident Management System in Emergency Operations Centres	2 days	Classroom
IMS 300	Intermediate Incident Management System	3 days	Classroom
IMS 400	Advanced Incident Management System	(under development)	
IMS 910	Basic Incident Management System Instructor	0.5 days	Classroom

Training provides participants with the theoretical aspect of learning. The practical/experiential aspect of learning can be achieved through the participation in simulation exercises and real-life experience with implementation during deployments.

Emergency Management Ontario also piloted an Incident Management Capacity Building Program that commenced in 2010 and was suspended in 2011. The Incident Management Capacity Building Program was a partnership between EMO and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The Incident Management Capacity Building Program allowed participants to gain incident management experience through observation and job shadowing during large-scale incidents.

Municipalities, services and agencies could/should replicate the Incident Management Capacity Building Program internally across Ontario to mentor participants in the Incident Management System curriculum.

- b. Should Incident Management System be required in emergency management-related legislation?

In Ontario the Incident Management System should be a requirement under the Ontario Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, this would ensure that all communities, through their Community Emergency Management Coordinator, working with emergency response and management stakeholders and partners, would implement and follow the Doctrine.

- c. Should Ontario use the same Incident Command System as other jurisdictions in North America?

There is no “one size fits all” Incident Command System in North America. In the United States the Presidential Policy Directive (PPD)-8 makes the components of National Incident Management System (NIMS) a requirement as part of the U.S. National Preparedness System. In Canada the Federal Government, through Public Safety Canada, does not provide guidance through legislation or leadership though policy in relation to the use of incident management systems. This is due to the Canada Constitution Act (1982), and further defined in the Federal Emergency Management Act (2007), where individual provinces have the responsibility for the implementation and management of their emergency management programs.

The Incident Management System for Ontario Doctrine was developed to be consistent with international best practices; the following references were largely consulted:

- The United States Department of Homeland Security's *National Incident Management System (NIMS) 2004 (FEMA 501)*, and its accompanying *NIMS Basic Series (2006)*;
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1561, *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System (2005)*;
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1600, *Standard on Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs (2007)*;
- The Firefighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies (FIRESCOPE) ICS Field Operations Guide (2004); and
- The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre's *Canadian National Training Curriculum (2002)*.

The purpose was to replicate best practices to ensure interoperability (functional and technical) while recognizing that Ontario is unique in some aspects of its response and management of emergencies.

- d. Should elements of Incident Management System be mandatory? If so, what elements should be mandatory?
 - i. Incident Action Plans
 - ii. Planning Operation/Planning cycle
 - iii. Communications
 - iv. Debriefing

All elements of the Incident Management System for Ontario Doctrine should be mandatory in Ontario; to choose only certain elements to be mandatory would erode at the goal of defining and implementing a complete and consistent incident management system. Adoption and implementation of a clear and concise incident command/management system, following the guiding principles of the Incident Command System, ensures that all response and management stakeholders' and partners' capabilities and capacities can be implemented and utilized appropriately.

The Incident Management System is adaptable and flexible to allow a "toolbox" approach, where the elements can be utilized according to the complexity of the event.

- e. Can the terminology involved be clarified and expressed in simpler terms (e.g. Incident Commander)?

Terminology is best defined for clarification by a "glossary of terms" which should remove any ambiguity or confusion with regards to what is actually meant and just as important; what is not meant.

A glossary of terms is not meant as a stand-alone document, but as a supporting document to the doctrine and the training modules. Within the doctrine explanation of the terminology will be defined, in the training modules terminology will be explained with examples and exploration in context for participants in relation to their agency or service.

- f. Should there be a requirement for preliminary reconnaissance by someone either on the scene or who can be transported there quickly i.e. by air especially where the scene is remote from Toronto so planning can begin immediately?

Initial comprehensive and integrated situational awareness is a key to incident management and is initiated at the onset with the initial notification (i.e. 9-1-1 call) to response authorities of local jurisdiction. Situational awareness continues to be developed and adjusted throughout the response, with the response authorities creating a "size up" (IMS Form 201) at a given time in the initial response. This size up should be shared, as appropriate, with all authorities that require situational awareness for the development of a common operating picture to assist with incident action planning. Current advances in technology allow for real time transmission of a common operating picture through audio (verbal), graphical (maps, video, photos) and documentation (paper and paperless). When the real time transmission occurs it should be interactive between those response authorities, to ensure the requirement of their responsibility in the response is met.

3) Decentralized Emergency Management

- a. Does the model of "bottom up response" established by the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and its regulations need to be refined?

Response is always "bottom up" from a community level, initial response is the responsibility of a local community; the inherent problem is that the capabilities and capacity of not only the initial response, but also the augmentation and the sustainment of response vary greatly across the Province of Ontario. Communities across Ontario receive no assistance (financial, material or human) to develop emergency response and management capabilities to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for their identified risks and vulnerabilities. It is only during the response and recovery phase that a community may reach out to the Province for assistance. During all phases communities are left to their own accord to develop memorandums of understanding, mutual aid agreements or partnerships with private or public entities to assist.

b. Are communities adequately supported by the province?

Communities across Ontario require a myriad of support from the Province, the question of “adequate support” is best defined by a community itself. Every community in Ontario; due to legislation (Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act) is required to complete an annual Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA). Based on the local community HIRA, they then address their vulnerabilities to the best of their capability (usually defined by local willingness (financial, material and human) and commitment. There within is the gap; communities in the Province have access to the Provincial HIRA, which identifies thirty-seven separate hazards broken down into three categories; natural, technological and human caused. Not all communities are exposed to the same hazards to the same degree, but they must consider all thirty-seven hazards. As with any risk assessment they have a difficult decision then to; a) accept the risk, b) eliminate the risk, c) mitigate the risk to acceptability or d) transfer the risk. While developing their communities HIRA the province provides only support of access to the Provincial HIRA and a HIRA Workbook. Communities then expend either financial or human resources to address their HIRA through prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery activities.

The prevention and mitigation phases of emergency management are largely the responsibility of municipalities, but the province does support and assist municipalities with provincial strategies that are programs within the various ministries.

In the preparedness phase of emergency management, the Province does provide some assistance; for example through a training program, the support for the training program varies depending on the need of a particular community, but that need is usually fulfilled through the initiative of another community. The Province has done an excellent job of providing guidance for a training program with administrative support, but the financial, material and human resources to sustain the program rests with municipalities.

During the response and recovery phases of emergency management is when communities can expect the greatest degree of support from the Province. During this phase, through the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre or the Fire Marshal’s Office, municipalities can request support. Response and recovery will be defined by the Office of Fire Marshal and Emergency Management through the assets that they deploy. The OFMEM has a very limited resource capability in-house to assist. They reach out to other municipal resources, provincial resources (outside of Ontario), and federal resources and in rare circumstances private resources.

c. Should the Province have responsibility for dealing with specific roles, such as media relations?

This statement/question is too generic in nature to provide any context to provide a response, other than to say that the Incident Management System has a distinct functional position for Information Officer within the Command Staff. The suggestion that the Province should fulfill this specific role, is best answered by the question, is it a Provincially Declared Emergency? In a Provincially Declared Emergency then the Province should have the responsibility for dealing with specific roles, such as media relations. But, local municipal residents want to hear from their locally elected officials and emergency response and management officials. The Incident Management System allows for the integration of a Provincial representative within the Information Officer function, as either the Officer or as an Assistant to ensure that media relations is coordinated to recognize both the local and the provincial interests.

d. Should teams, such as Incident Support teams used in the United States, be considered in the Ontario emergency management structure?

In the U.S. FEMA introduced two different types of teams that are capable of assisting a community in times of need; ISTs are there for assistance when there has been deployment of US&R assets, and IMATs are deployed to communities for any hazard type emergencies.

Incident Support Teams in the U.S. are:

The National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Incident Support Team (IST) provides a group of highly qualified specialists readily available for rapid assembly and deployment to a disaster area. The IST furnishes Federal, State, and local officials with technical assistance in acquiring and using US&R resources. It provides advice, incident command assistance, management and coordination of US&R task forces, and US&R logistics support.

http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/usr/ist_ops_manual.pdf

Incident Management Assistance Teams in the U.S. are:

The IMATs are full-time, rapid-response teams with dedicated staff able to deploy within two hours and arrive at an incident within 12 hours to support the local incident commander. The teams support the initial establishment of a unified command and provide situational awareness for federal and state decision-makers crucial to determining the level and type of immediate federal support that may be required.

http://www.fema.gov/pdf/media/factsheets/2010/imat_fact_sheet_10_05_10.pdf

Communities in Ontario would benefit from the availability of both types of teams. Currently the only similar mechanism in place is through the Office of Fire Marshal and Emergency Management, with the deployment of Field Officers at municipal Emergency Operations Centres to fulfill the role of IMS Liaison Officers back to the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre. The Ontario IMS Steering Committee, during previous meetings has discussed development of a capacity/capability similarly in Ontario. With the support and guidance of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, there was in place a Capacity Building Program where individuals representing emergency management response agencies would be mentored through a five stage process to have the ability to fulfill the functional roles within an IMS structure. These individuals would then be contacted by OFMEM for deployment across Ontario to fulfill IMS positions. Unfortunately OFMEM in 2012 placed the Capacity Building Program on hold.

Roundtable 2: Issues relating to the entities that may respond to an emergency

3) Jurisdiction/Command and Control

- a. When more than one entity responds to an emergency, how should command and control operate? (i.e. who should be in charge?)

Command and control are dealt with completely within the doctrine and the training curriculum; the example cited is “who should be in charge”. Initial response is; in charge of what?

The core principles of the Incident Management System within the IMS for Ontario Doctrine deal with command and control:

Interoperability

- Interoperability is the ability of responders to interact and work well together. Interoperability should exist in relations to technologically as well as with performance of IMS functions.
 - Technological interoperability (such as telecommunications interoperability) should allow for the sharing of information among responders, as well as with other jurisdictions. Technological

- interoperability should encompass all resources likely to be utilized in incident management (e.g. radios, computers, satellite, and telephones).
- Functional interoperability may be achieved through the application and use of standardized terminologies, structures, and procedures amongst responders. IMS is designed to specifically allow for functional interoperability through the adoption and application of standardization.

Inter-Organizational Collaboration

- Where an incident involves multiple organizations and/or multiple jurisdictions, inter-organizational collaboration and coordination are critical to ensuring an effective response. It is important to define the roles, relationships and the accountability framework in which organizations collaborate. Collaboration also requires interoperability.

Unity of Command

- IMS operates on a defined and specific command and control structure that provides an orderly line of command and accountability. This is based on the function being performed and the expertise of the incident management staff, rather than rank, organization or jurisdiction. To ensure unity of command, each individual should have one clearly designated supervisor, who may or may not come from the same jurisdiction or service.
- Command of an incident may be exercised through a single command process when one response organization has jurisdictional or functional responsibility for the incident, or under a unified command process, where multiple response organizations or jurisdictions have jurisdictional or functional responsibility for the incident. Whether the IMS is operating under a single or unified command structure, unity of command must be maintained

Keeping these principles in mind, the IMS for Ontario Doctrine goes on to further explain;

Models of Incident Command

There are two models of Incident Command that may be used during the response to an incident: 1) Single, or 2) Unified.

1) Single Command model

Single Command exists when the decision-making process needed to direct the response is straightforward and independent. This typically is the case when an incident is the responsibility of a single jurisdiction, or organization. A Single Command model may be arrived at:

- By default when only one jurisdiction or organization is involved
- By design when multiple jurisdictions or organizations that are involved decide and agree on a Single Command
- By legislation if the responsibility is legally that of one jurisdiction, or organization

2) Unified Command model

- Unified Command (UC) may be used on rare occasions when incident decision-making is complex, and interdependent, and a Single Command cannot be established.

Organizations work together through their designated members of the UC, to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single IAP.

- The Unified Command team will agree upon one spokesperson to represent it, when necessary. There may be different spokespersons on different occasions, but typically, there will only be one spokesperson at a time.
- Under the Unified Command model, there is only one Operations Section Chief, normally appointed, by agreement, from the organization with the greatest jurisdictional or functional involvement. He or she will implement the IAP coordinated by the Planning Section Chief (PSC) and approved by the Unified Command team. The Operations Chief may have one or more Deputies from other organizations.

The IMS for Ontario Doctrine provides clarification of how command and control should function while respecting jurisdictional and legislated authorities while ensuring that the Incident Commanders mission is met through integrated objectives, strategies and tactics to accomplish the Incident Action Plan.

- b. Should there be a more specific command structure within jurisdictional entities and between different entities (e.g., the command structure within TF3 and the command structure between TF3 and UCRT)?

It is important to recognize that within the Incident Management System there are five management functional areas; Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance and Administration. Each of these functional areas has a distinct administrative organizational structure with an inherent unity of command structure.

When discussing command structures for response entities such as TF3 and UCRT it is important to recognize that all response entities at an incident should and can be accommodated within the Incident Management System structure at the site. This is not to say they give up their own inherent and specific structure (i.e. Squads, Teams, etc.).

A principle of IMS that addresses this is:
Inter-Organizational Collaboration

Where an incident involves multiple organizations and/or multiple jurisdictions, inter-organizational collaboration and coordination are critical to ensuring an effective response. It is important to define the roles, relationships and the accountability framework in which organizations collaborate. Collaboration also requires interoperability.

4) Consistency in Response:

- a. Should there be greater consistency in training standards among emergency-related entities?

There should be consistency in training standards among emergency-related entities to fulfill the principles of IMS. This will involve a shift in how training is currently delivered, including modification of current standard operating procedures; especially in relation to establishing command, transfer of command, and unity of command.

Emergency Services would need to understand that they may have to report to a member of the response organizational structure who is not a member of their service, and that they do not normally report to in their administrative organizational structure.

Common terminology would require further development and implemented as part of the training curriculum.

- b. Should emergency-related entities train together more frequently?

Those emergency-related entities that respond together should train together. As to the questions related to frequency of that inter-agency training this would require further examination to define current gaps, the inter-agency training curriculum and frequency of the training.

c. How can uniformity in communications (e.g. radio communications) be improved?

Uniformity in communications, such as radio communications can definitely be improved, through addressing various components of interoperability;

- Interoperability
 - Interoperability is the ability of responders to interact and work well together. Interoperability should exist technologically as well as in relation to the performance of IMS functions.
Technological interoperability (such as telecommunications interoperability) should allow for the sharing of information among responders, as well as with other jurisdictions. Technological interoperability should encompass all resources likely to be utilized in incident management (e.g. radios, computers, satellite, and telephones).
Functional interoperability may be achieved through the application and use of standardized terminologies, structures, and procedures amongst responders. IMS is designed to specifically allow for functional interoperability through the adoption and application of standardization.

Elements of interoperability include governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training/exercises, and usage of interoperable communications.

ⁱ www.en.wikipedia.org