
The Incident Command System (ICS)

An Introduction and Overview

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Presented to Los Altos ARES & CERT April 8, 2006



Los Altos ARES

What is ICS?

- **Incident Command System**
- A ***predefined*** organization structure, set of jobs, functions, and operating protocols for use in managing emergency situations and disaster events and deploying resources
- For use in the field by ALL first responders
- Can be applied to any type of emergency or disaster: fire, police, medical, natural or man-made disaster.



History

- First developed in the early 1970s by FIRESCOPE (Firefighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies), a multi-agency taskforce, for use in fighting wild fires.
- It has evolved over the years to become a standard nation-wide method of organizing and managing the response to emergencies and disasters in the field.

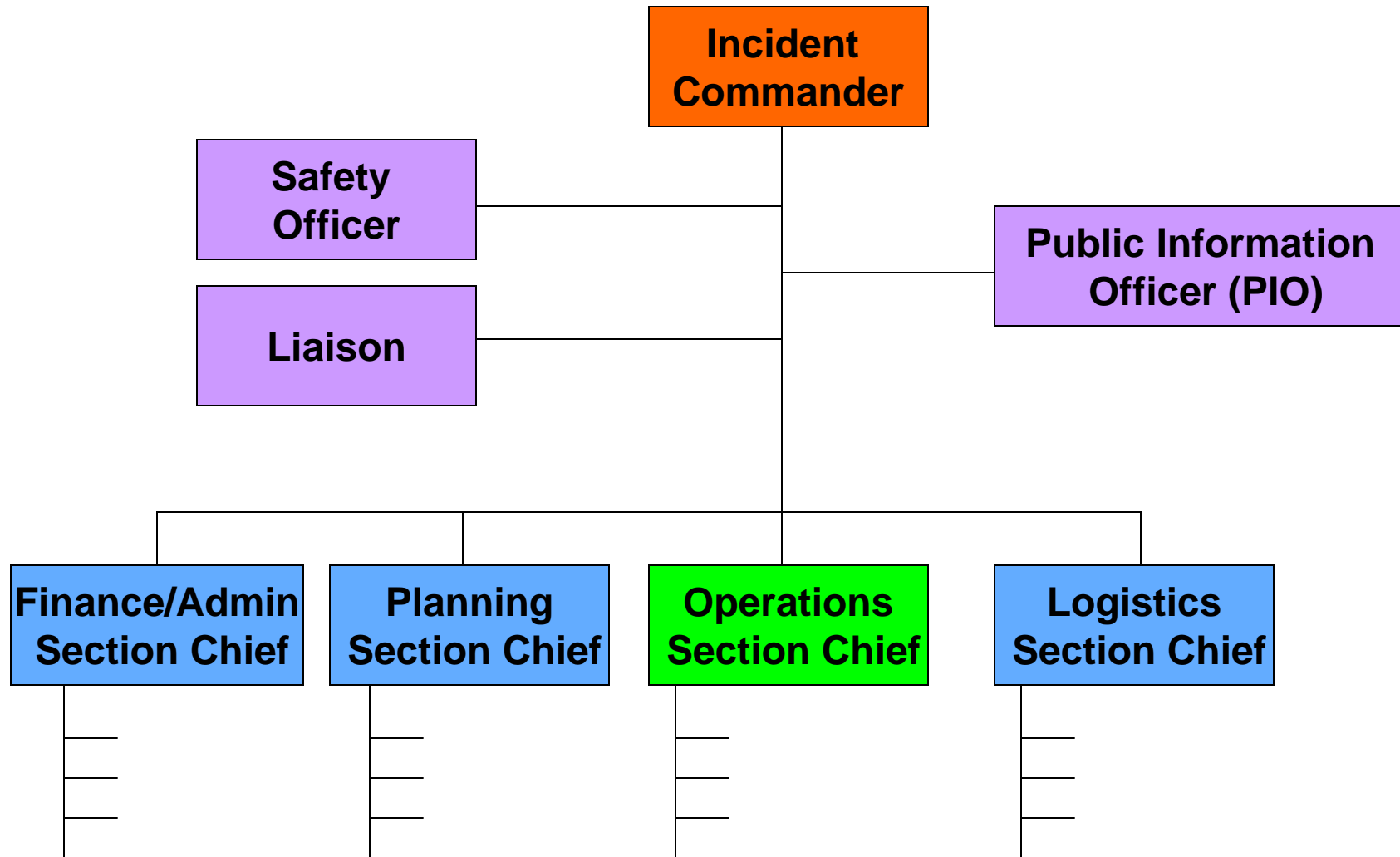


Scope of ICS Use

- Used by all Emergency and Disaster responders in California and most in the U. S.
- Has been used in California since early 1970s and was mandated in 1991.
- Key component of California's ***Standardized Emergency Management System*** (SEMS)
- Adopted and promoted by FEMA as a component of the ***National Incident Management System*** (NIMS)



The Basic ICS Functions & Jobs



IC

- ***Incident Commander***
- Is **the** person in charge of all aspects of the incident.
- Usually assumed by first emergency responder on the scene with the skills and authority to do the job.
- IC will assume all roles initially, then delegate as needed
- Orderly Transfer of Command: IC role can be reassigned at any time by mutual agreement



Operations Section

Responsible for:

- All Tactical operations
- Implementing ***Incident Action Plan***
- Controlling and rendering the incident safe



Organizational Hierarchy

- Used to managing span of control and assignment of responsibility
 - Section (Operations, Logistics, Planning, and Finance).
 - Branch
 - Division or Group
 - Unit
- Different agencies will start at different levels.



Logistics Section

- Provides facilities, services & support
- Service Branch
 - Communication unit
 - Medical unit
 - Food
- Support Branch
 - Supply unit
 - Facilities unit



Planning Section

- Gathers, analyzes, and disseminates information and intelligence.
- Manages the planning process.
- Compiles the ***Incident Action Plan***
- Functions:
 - Resource unit
 - Situation unit
 - Documentation unit
 - Technical Specialists Unit

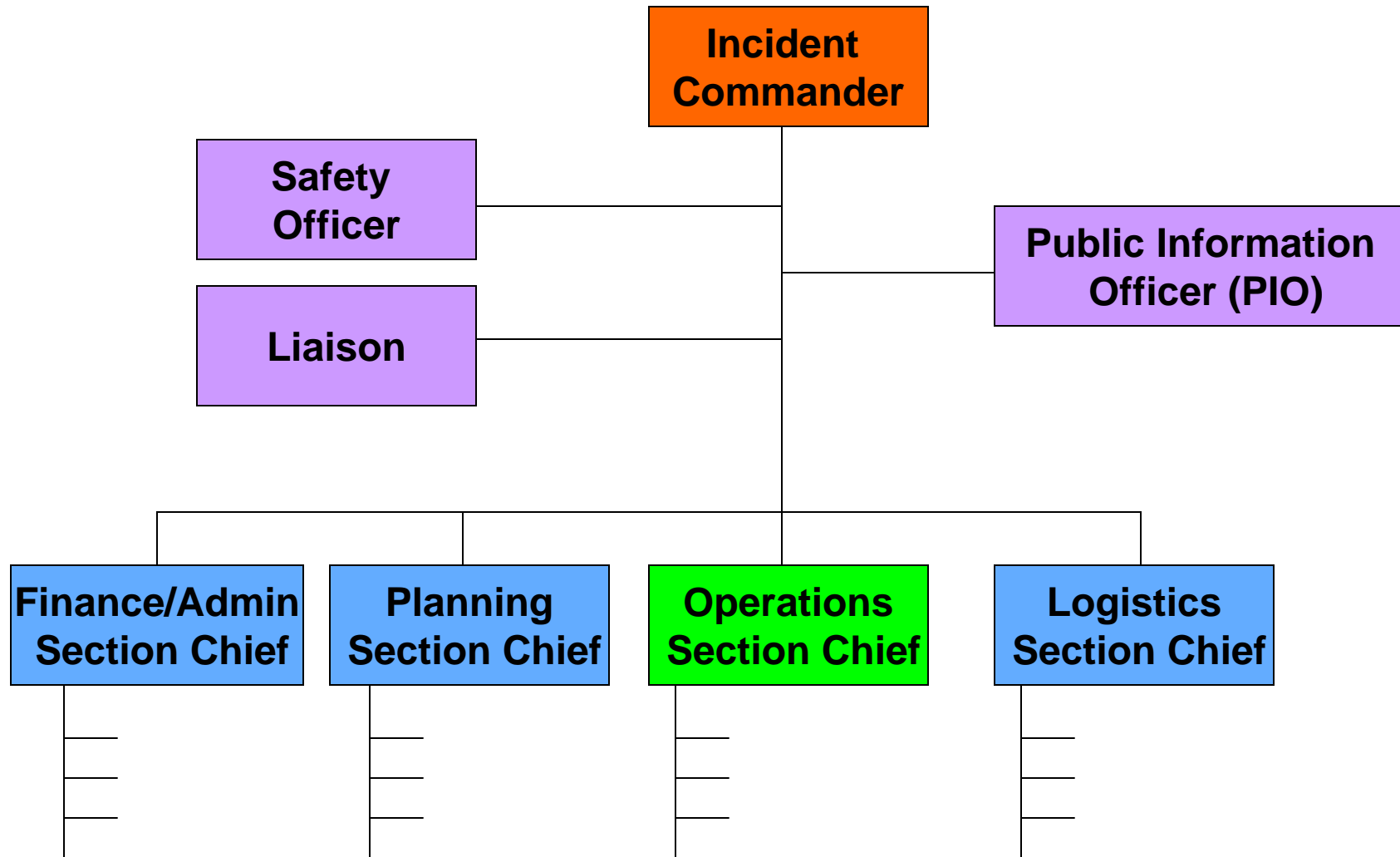


Finance/ Admin Section

- Responsible for the financial, accounting, and administrative aspects of an incident.
- Time cards, purchases, inter-departmental charges, materials consumed, claims, etc.
- Reimbursements from state, Federal, other agencies



The Basic ICS Functions & Jobs



Safety Officer

- Monitoring and assessing hazardous and unsafe situations
- Corrects unsafe acts and conditions through ICS line of authority
- Emergency authority to stop or prevent unsafe acts



PIO

- ***Public Information Officer***
- Formulation and release of information about the incident to ***News Media*** and other appropriate agencies and organizations
- Hams & CERT should NEVER talk to the media directly. Always refer the person to the PIO
- There is no such thing as “off the record”

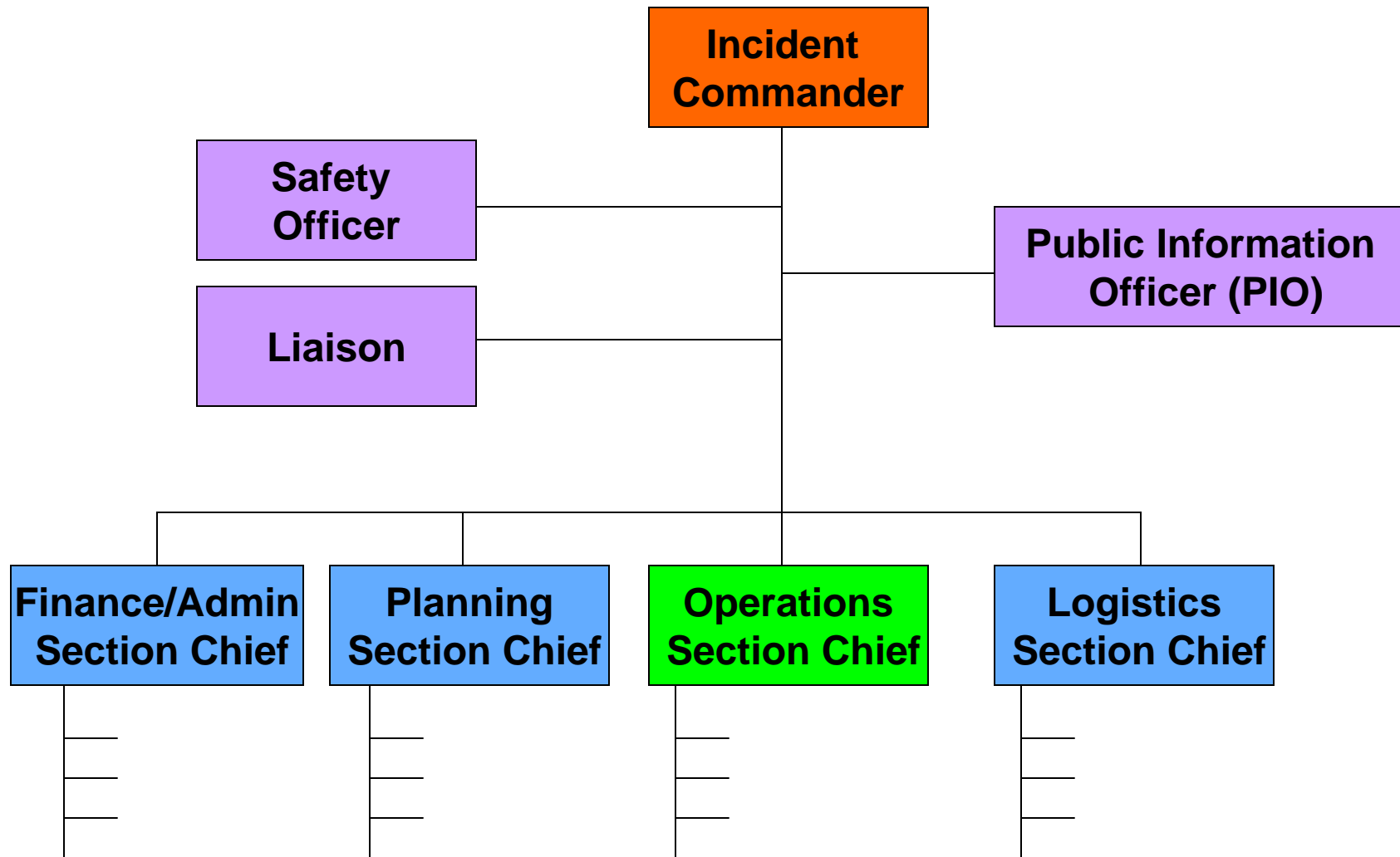


Liaison Officer

- Point of contact for other agency representatives (Police, Fire, OSHA, EPA, etc.)



The Basic ICS Jobs/Functions



Other Key Elements of ICS

- Documentation of ***ICS Structure*** for the specific incident – who is doing what
- ***Situation Analysis***
- ***Incident Action Plan***



Key Features of ICS

- Flexible – can be designed to meet any organization/agency needs
- Adaptive – can be applied to all types of emergency/disaster situations – fire, police, natural disaster, etc.
- Scalable – can be expanded/contracted as situation requires
- Common Terminology – no 10 codes, **no Q signals**, etc.
- Modular organization – function and span of control management
- Provides for
 - A comprehensive resource command
 - A unified command structure
 - Consolidated action plans
 - Manageable span of control
- Designated incident Facilities – Command Post, Base, Camp, Staging areas, etc.
- Integrated communications



ICS Facilities

- Command Post – the location of IC
- Staging Areas – a place where resources are assembled before deployment
- Base – location from which primary logistics and administrative functions are coordinated and administered
- Camps – location where people are housed and fed.
- Heliport – a place where helicopters can be serviced.
- Helispot – a place where helicopters can land



How Hams Can be Involved

- Hams can be assigned to any ICS function as needed to provide communications support.
- Typical roles:
 - Observe and report - Information gathering roles
 - Communications for Red Cross shelters
 - Communications for Red Cross Disaster Assessment team.
 - Logistics support
 - Operational support



How CERT Members can be Involved

- Assigned to an Operations Division???



SEMS

- ***Standardized Emergency Management System***
- Developed by California OES
- ICS concepts applied to multi-agency/jurisdiction situations.
- Each City, County, ***Region, Operational Area***, and the ***State*** have specific organizations and plans structured similar to ICS
- Manages multiple incidents within jurisdiction
- Manages incidents with multiple jurisdictions and agencies
- Requests resources from and reports up to next level
- Developed as a result of Oakland Hills fire in October 1991.
- Required statewide as of December 1, 1996



SEMS incorporates:

- **Incident Command System**
- **Multi/inter-agency coordination** – Affected agencies working together to coordinate allocations of resources and emergency response activities.
- **Mutual aid** - A system for obtaining additional emergency resources from non-affected jurisdictions.
- **Operational Area Concept** - County and its subdivisions to coordinate damage information, resource requests and emergency response

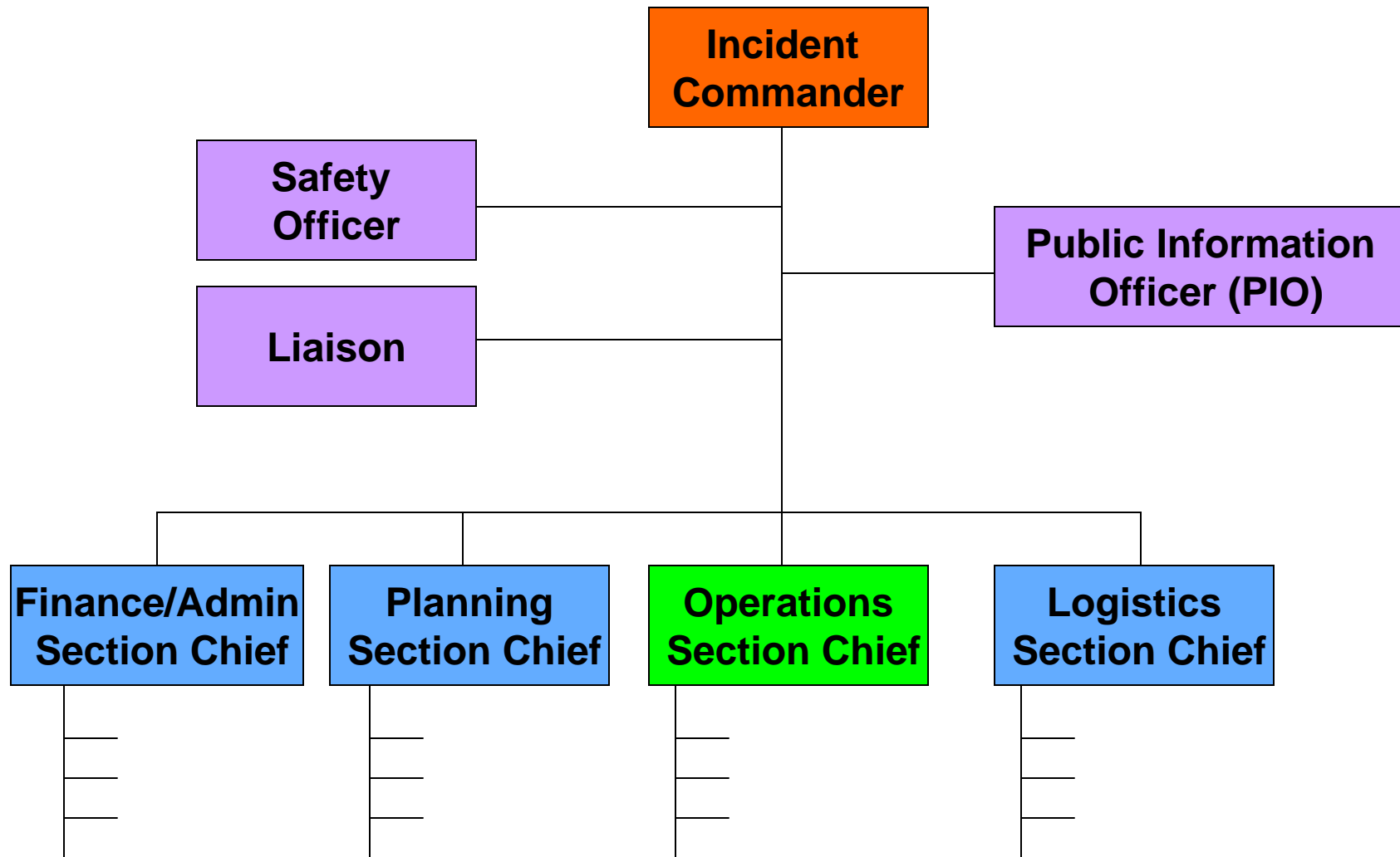


NIMS

- ***National Incident Management System***
- FEMA's effort to have a SEMS like system nationally
- California offered FEMA SEMS as a proven emergency management system.
- FEMA invented their own solution
- California is being forced to adopt NIMS
- Doing an "integration" of SEMS and NIMS
- NIMS was not used during hurricane Katrina



Q & A about ICS



References

FEMA Independent Study Programs:

- **IS-100 Introduction to Incident Command System**

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100lst.asp>

- **IS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents**

<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS200.asp>

- **IS-700 National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction**

<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS700.asp>

SEMS Reference Page

<http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/Content/B49435352108954488256C2A0071E038?OpenDocument>

SEMS/NIMS Convergence Reference Page

<http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/ALL/3D8DC8F9C9DCF2D688256FCB0065B847?OpenDocument>

