State of California EMSA,
Disaster Medical Services Division

Mission Support Team

Planning Section Training

Independent Study

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I. SECTION MANAGEMENT

1. MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

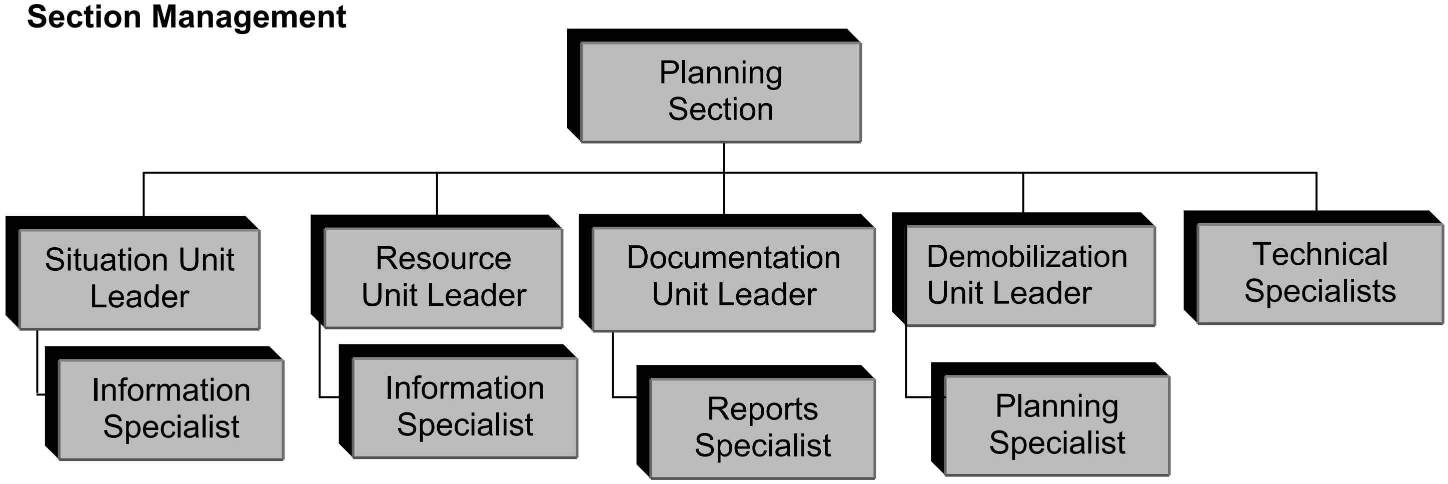
A. The mission of the Planning Section Chief is to establish the responsibilities and direct the operations of the Section. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) Coordinating, directing and managing Section activities.
2) Ensuring adequate staff, equipment, and supplies are available to support Section responsibilities.
3) Ensuring the Section supports the disaster operation.

2. ORGANIZATION

Section management consists of a Section Chief and, when required, a Deputy Section Chief. If the disaster workload does not support a dedicated Deputy Section Chief, the functions of the Deputy are transferred to the Situation Unit Leader. As always, staffing of individual positions will be determined by the magnitude and scope of the disaster and evolving requirements of the Planning Section. The standard Planning Section management positions are depicted in the organizational chart below.

Figure 1
Section Management



3. MANAGEMENT

While effective management is a challenging enterprise under the best of circumstances, it can become daunting within a disaster response environment. Not only is the operational situation likely to be highly charged and the pressure to meet deadlines often intense, but many Section staff members may be working together for the first time, or be very inexperienced in the area of their assigned duties. All these factors can contribute to a potentially combustible organizational situation that the Section Chief must quickly transform into a synchronous, smooth-running operation. An effective Section Chief must be thoroughly familiar with the entire range of section responsibilities and products and able to function in any section role and produce any and all section products. Under the principles of the Incident Command System, if a Unit Leader position is not filled, the roles and responsibilities of that position belong to the Section Chief. The Section Chief must also be familiar with the organizational structure of the entire MST organization. Most importantly, the Section Chief must be able to continually visualize the needs of the situation and organize an effective response. Both at the beginning and in the end, organization is the Section Chief's key to effective management.

4. STAFFING

A. Determining staffing needs is a critical initial (and continuing) task of the Section Chief, and must be accomplished immediately. However, establishing a Section staffing requirement involves more than just determining the total number of needed personnel. The Section Chief must also determine what *positions* are needed, as well as what *level of experience* is required for each functional position. Too few experienced personnel may cripple the Section's ability to efficiently and effectively support the needs of the organization, particularly during the highly dynamic, initial response phase. Conversely, seeking only highly experienced staff may result in the section being understaffed at a critical time and the inability to train and familiarize new staff. Overstaffing is preferable to understaffing. The most common error of inexperienced Section Chiefs is to under staff the Section during the initial stages of the response operation. The consequences of such understaffing can be profound: reduced support; inferior products; loss of credibility with management and other organizational elements ending in employee resentment and dissatisfaction.

B. The size and composition of the MST Planning Section personnel will normally be determined by EMSA/DMS However, the Section Chief should not wait until arrival at the operating location to begin determining Section staffing requirements. Immediately upon notification to deploy to a disaster site, the Section Chief should:

1) Coordinate staffing needs with the leaders of the operation.

2) Relay requirements to the EMSA/DMS for request entry.

3) Contact the Unit Leaders to discuss the disaster situation, and jointly determine minimum staffing and experience requirements.

Figure 2 –Minimum Suggested Staffing Levels

Staff Position	MST Planning Activation Level			
	Advance	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
SECTION MANAGEMENT				
SECTION CHIEF	1	1	1	1
DEPUTY SECTION CHIEF	0	0	AS NEEDED	1
SITUATION UNIT				
UNIT LEADER	0	1	1	1
INFORMATION SPECIALIST (Additional as needed)	0	0	0	1
DEMOBILIZATION UNIT				
UNIT LEADER	0	1	1	1
PLANNING SPECIALIST (Additional as needed)	0	AS NEEDED	0	1
RESOURCE UNIT				
UNIT LEADER	0	0	1	1
INFORMATION SPECIALIST (Additional as needed)	0	AS NEEDED	0	1*
DOCUMENTATION UNIT				
UNIT LEADER	0	0	1	1
REPORTS SPECIALIST (Additional as needed)	0	AS NEEDED	0	1
SHIFT TOTALS	**1**	**3**	**5**	**10**

Note: Level III standby is not an official operating classification. It is presented here to describe those monitoring activities that may be needed to deal with increase homeland security operations but where an actual event is not in progress.

5. SCHEDULING

A. The Section Chief, in collaboration with Unit Leaders, will establish personnel work schedules for each staffed position in the Section. These schedules may or may not mirror the MST hours of operation. If it is necessary to schedule personnel for duty either before the MST opens or after it closes, the Section Chief will need to coordinate access with the Security Officer and Logistics Section Chief.

B. The Planning Section does not work a set shift schedule. Scheduling assignments are based on supported projects, priorities, and deadlines. For example; if the MST opens at 0700 and the MST Commander Staff Meeting is scheduled for 0800, several Section positions may need to report to work several hours earlier in order to assure the morning Status Briefing and Daily Intelligence Summary are prepared.

C. The Section Chief should delegate the development of unit personnel schedules to individual Unit Leaders, but must review and approve those schedules prior to implementation. As part of the review process, the Section Chief should ensure that unit schedules:

1) Are mutually supportive. For example, the Section Chief should ensure that Information Specialists are scheduled to support the after-hours information collection requirements of other scheduled unit personnel who may require such support.

2) Are (to the extent practical) equitable. For example, the Section Chief should ensure that one unit is not *unnecessarily* working 12-hour shifts while the rest of the Section is working 8-hour shifts.

3) Provide sufficient time off for Section members. As a goal, strive to provide each Section member at least one day off out of every seven.

D. The Section Chief must balance the needs of the disaster response mission against the welfare of Section personnel, and recognize that the mission will not be served by personnel who are too fatigued to perform their duties in a satisfactory manner. Therefore, if possible, establish a 10-hour workday for Section personnel, rather than the standard 12-hour shift. The pace of Section activities can easily lead to excessive fatigue and produce an associated increase in errors and mistakes. Reducing the workday to 10 hours will help reduce these fatigue-related human errors. While it is recognized that the 10-hour workday is an ideal; operational necessity may require 12-hour or longer workdays, at least during the initial response stages.

E. The practice of compensating for understaffing by imposing arduous workdays is not acceptable as a permanent solution to a protracted situation. Although long workdays may be imposed as a temporary, interim solution, it is the Section Chief's responsibility to ensure that staffing is quickly brought to a level commensurate with the workload. It is understood that temporary fluctuations in workload may occur, and provoke temporary but necessary changes in scheduling. However, sustained workload increases should be answered with a proportionate increase in staff.

F. One method of determining if staffing is workload-balanced is to develop an activity/production schedule that identifies key recurring activities and production requirements, normally by unit or functional area. Developing (and maintaining) such a schedule requires identifying those recurring activities and products the Section is responsible to support or produce, linked to an hourly schedule. Developing (and maintaining) such a schedule requires input from each of the Unit Leaders.

6. MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Upon arrival at the disaster location, the Section Chief should meet with Unit Leaders and determine logistics requirements (equipment, supplies, support contracts, and space) for both the Section and the Situation Room. These requirements must be immediately conveyed to the MST Logistics Section*; do not wait for your requirements to be solicited*. A baseline, by-unit breakdown of projected Section requirements is provided at Figure 3, Planning Section Logistics Requirements. This worksheet can be copied, amended to reflect the requirements of the current situation, and turned in as-is to the MST Logistics Section for support.

Figure 3 - Example Activity/Production Schedule

TIME	MST ACTIVITY	SECTION CHIEF	SITUATION UNIT	RESOURCE UNIT	DEMOBILIZATION	DOCUMENTATION
0600 - 0700		Review Incident Objectives with MST Commander Ops , and Log and suggest additions or modifications	Collect information updates from MST elements	Collect information updates from Logistics/MAC	Collect information on status of Objectives from previous Operational Period, coordinate with Situation Unit	Update briefing books, compile SITREP, SITREP Update, Fact sheets and prepare other reports or products as required or requested
0700 - 0800			Prepare Daily Intelligence Summary. Ensure SITROOM is configured and displays are updated.	Coordinate with Situation Unit for updating SITROOM displays		
0800 - 0900	MST COMMANDER morning Staff Meeting	Facilitate MST COMMANDER Staff Meeting	Provide Status Briefing at MST COMMANDER Staff Meeting; Facilitate if delegated by Chief	Update Organization Chart (ICS 207) and Organization Assignments (ICS 203)	Coordinate Planning portion of MST COMMANDER Staff Meeting	
0900 - 1000		Manage Section activities	GIS Provide continuing support as required or requested throughout the period. Gather and analyze information; maintain SITROOM and keep displays updated; provide support as required or requested	In coordination with Logistics and Mission Assignment Coordinator, track all resources including critical commodities: List as Assigned, Available, Not in Service Participate with Operations Section in Development of Planning Worksheet (ICS 215)	Distribute Incident Objectives (ICS-202)	
1000 - 1100					Conduct Strategic and Supporting Planning Conduct Demobilization Planning as appropriate	
1100 - 1200						
1200 - 1300						
1300 - 1400						
1400 - 1500						

1500 - 1600				If not done previously, prepare draft Assignment Lists (ICS 204) and pass to Demobilization Unit	Produce Agenda, set up Situation Room and coordinate with Resource Unit to produce draft IAP	
1600 - 1630		Attend Planning Meeting		Participate in Planning Meeting	Facilitate Planning Meeting if not done by Chief	Submit draft SITREP for approval
1630 - 1800		Manage Section activities		Update ICS-204 and other forms based on Planning Meeting, Coordinate with Demob.	Prepare, publish and distribute Incident Action Plan	Publish and distribute SITREP
1800 - 1900	Operations Briefing (if not scheduled for AM)				Provide support as required or requested	

B. The physical layout of the Section will depend largely on projected staff size and the area of the MST to which the Section is ultimately assigned. To ensure that the Section is allocated an optimum (or, at the very least, adequate) workspace, the Section Chief must quickly identify and convey spatial requirements to the MST Logistics Section.

C. In addition to spatial considerations, the Section Chief must also be concerned about the physical placement of the Section within the MST. As the information nerve center of the MST, it is functionally important that the Planning Section, including the Situation Room, be located in close proximity to the Operations Section and MST COMMANDER. However, if a choice must be made between the two, establish the Section near the Operations Section.

D. Situating the Section in a large, open area is preferable to a cluster of smaller rooms. Segregating the units into separate rooms tends to result in reduced intra-section communication.

E. Once MST space has been allocated, immediately prepare a representative floor plan (use the figures from the furniture and equipment request turned in to Logistics, as well as the figures from the staffing request turned). If the assigned area does not provide sufficient workspace, notify the MST Logistics Section immediately. Discrepancies between perceived need and spatial availability must be resolved before adjacent space is assigned and occupied by another MST element.

F. Regardless of allocated space, unit activities that traditionally generate a considerable amount of external traffic (e.g., Geospatial production or information coordination) should be situated so as to minimize the disruption to other Section elements. Generally, that means positioning those activities near the entrance to the Section.

7. KEY INITIAL ACTIVITIES

A. The first several days of an operation are typically the most chaotic time of the deployed response effort. It is a time, therefore, when arriving elements are extremely receptive to organized direction. This temporary period of increased receptivity presents an unparalleled but highly perishable opportunity to lay the groundwork for a textbook Planning Section operation. It is important that the Planning Section Chief recognize and aggressively take advantage of this opportunity through the quick but firm institution of desired, standard Section processes and procedures. The following represent key actions and activities that the Section Chief should take during the early stages of the initial response phase.

1) **<u>The Unit Leader Meeting</u>**. First impressions can be lasting impressions; so it is important that the Section generate a good first impression to the management and other MST elements. Therefore, immediately upon arriving at the operating location, the Section Chief should meet with the Unit Leaders and lay out a course of action over the next few days. It is crucial that this meeting produce a unified understanding of each others responsibilities. During this meeting, the Section Chief should:

a. Describe the specific actions he or she is planning to take to gain control of information processing and management activities (see the following key initial activities).

b. Determine unit capabilities and limitations.

c. Articulate the Section’s operational strategy for this period.

2) **<u>The One-on-One Management Briefing</u>**. This is among the very first actions the Section Chief should take after meeting with the Unit Leaders. Its purpose is to define the role of the Section and identify how the Section will support the RRCC Director or MST COMMANDER. Where possible, the Operations Section Chief should also attend this meeting. The Planning Section Chief should:

a. Outline precisely how the Planning Section will support management, to include the identification of specific supporting products (briefings, Daily Intelligence Summary, etc.).

b. Determine the preliminary priorities and specific support requirements or requests, in particular information requirements.

c. Review Incident Action Planning procedures for the incident, and if possible obtain initial Incident Objectives and prospective Strategic Goals.

d. Propose standard MST Commander's Meeting and Operational Period Planning Meeting times.

3) **<u>The Initial Staff Meeting</u>**. It is extremely important that the Section Chief establish his or her authority, and the role of the Section, at the initial staff meeting held by the MST Commander. It is essentially a "take-charge" briefing, in which the Section Chief confidently explains the Section's role as the broker of information and planning activities for MST. Nothing is more crucial to the credibility of the Section at this juncture of the response than gaining the confidence and support of the MST. To achieve success, the Section Chief must coordinate the briefing with the management (refer to previous paragraph), and be able to succinctly, confidently and firmly articulate Planning processes to a group of questionably receptive peers. At this meeting, the Section Chief must be prepared to succinctly explain:

a. How the Section will support the MST, and what type of support is required of the other Sections or elements.

b. The deadlines that the Section has or will establish for information or support, and why those deadlines are important.

c. The information collection process.

d. The Incident Action Planning process as it will be implemented for the incident.

8. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

As previously mentioned, an effective Section Chief requires not only a comprehensive and commanding grasp of Planning functions and responsibilities, but also a thorough understanding and appreciation of managerial practices. The following represent some basic, recommended Section Chief practices.

A. Never malign, admonish, or non-constructively criticize a Section staff member in the presence of other employees. *Conversely, any praise or commendation directed toward a staff member should <u>always</u> be delivered in the presence of the employee's peers.*

B. Insulate section personnel from direct criticism originating outside the Section. Instead, personally field any Section-generated problems, and then privately debrief the responsible Section employee. *Remember, insulation does not imply evasion. Convert negative feedback into positive reinforcement.*

C. Frequently solicit the opinions and counsel of your Unit Leaders, and insist they do the same of their unit personnel. *Employees perform better when they recognize their opinions are valued and have an impact on operations.*

D. Do not unilaterally compromise, or ask employees to compromise, quality or accuracy for the sake of expediency. *Preserve your credibility and that of the Section at all costs. Impose high expectations on Section staff and insist those expectations be met.*

E. When reviewing SITREPs or other products, avoid wordsmithing. *If the verbiage conveys the intended meaning, and is grammatically accurate, then refrain from changing it. However, stress simplicity and plain language.*

F. Always support your personnel in the presence of detractors from outside the Section. *However, if your staff member was in the wrong, immediately counsel the employee in private and insist that he or she seek out and provide an explanation or apologize to the external party.*

9. "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" (FOUO) DESIGNATIONS

A. "For Official Use Only" (FOUO) is a designation for documents that for various reasons need to be excluded from the access provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). It ***is not*** a security classification for a document that would require a security clearance to view or handle.

B. Some planning products that may warrant this designation include:

1) Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)
2) Status of Teams Maps (In WMD Events)
3) Locations of response facilities and staff (In WMD Events)

C. The designation of a document FOUO is not to be taken lightly. There are significant legal and public records concerns for materials excluded from FOIA requirements. Anyone designating a document FOUO should be prepared to legally explain why that material cannot be released to the public under FOIA.

D. Documents that are to be designated FOUO must be reviewed by the Planning Section or Deputy Section Chief to assure that they meet at least one of the four requirements to be covered. These requirements are:

1) Confidential personnel data and other information, the release of which could reasonably be expected to constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy of individuals;

2) Information received in confidence in connection with bids and proposals, trade secrets, inventions and discoveries, and reports of financial, technical or scientific nature;

3) Information on plans to protect buildings, curtail disturbances, or comparable activities if unauthorized disclosure could seriously compromise, degrade or cancel the planned protective measures;

4) Unclassified material intended for public disclosure at a specific future time that, in the interim, is to be safeguarded against premature public disclosure.

In most cases, Item 3) will cover the requirements of the Planning Section.

E. If a document meets the requirements for a FOUO designation, the form found in Figure 11 must be completed and attached to the document.

F. Documents designated FOUO are given to the Documentation Unit for filing as ***records***.

G. As soon as the information no longer requires FOUO designation, the document should be released. Documents for release can be reviewed by anyone having the authority to designate FOUO status within the Planning Section. The release date and signature should be recorded on the form and the materials returned to the records files.

H. Planning Section may not designate or release FOUO materials produced by other sections or elements.

Figure 4 Designation Page/Checklist

For Official Use Only Designation Page/Checklist	
Name:	**Title:**
Date:	**Time:**
Name of Document:	
Description of Document:	
Exemption Claimed:	
☐	**Confidential personnel data and other information, the release of which could reasonably be expected to constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy of individuals;**
☐	**Information received in confidence in connection with bids and proposals, trade secrets, inventions and discoveries, and reports of financial, technical or scientific nature;**
☐	**Information on plans to protect buildings, curtail disturbances, or comparable activities if unauthorized disclosure could seriously compromise, degrade or cancel the planned protective measures;**
☐	**Unclassified material intended for public disclosure at a specific future time that, in the interim, is to be safeguarded against premature public disclosure.**
Date of Designation:	**Date of Expiration*:**
***If over one year ► ► ► ► ► ► ► ►►►►►**	**Date of Review:**
FOUO Checklist:	
☐	**Is the document marked "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" on the bottom of the front cover, title page, first page, each individual page, and outside of back cover?**
☐	**Is this form attached to an original of the document being designated that is properly marked and formatted?**
☐	**Is this package being transferred to the appropriate records custodian for filing and retention?**
☐	**Have actions been taken to safeguard this document and its copies after normal business hours?**
Printed Name of Designee:	
Signature of Designee:	
Title of Designee:	
Date/Time of Designation:	
Designation Release Date:	**Released by:**

II. SITUATION UNIT

1. MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The mission of the Situation Unit is to gather, analyze, display, and distribute various types of information to support MST activities and requirements. Primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

A. Development and implementation of an Information Collection Plan (ICP) to support Section, MST and state deployed medical teams and individuals requirements and activities.

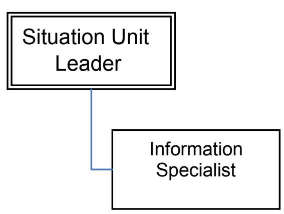
B. Analysis, validation and evaluation of incoming information from all sources.

C. Production the Daily Intelligence Summary, Situation Briefing, and Succession Listing.

D. Management and maintenance of the MST Display and Briefing area and the MST Situation Room including the overall Meeting Schedule and agendas.

2. ORGANIZATION

Figure 5 Situation Unit



The Situation Unit consists of two designated functional positions, led by a Unit Leader. As always, staffing of individual positions will be determined by the magnitude and scope of the disaster and evolving requirements of the Planning Section of the MST. In a large incident one or more Information Specialists may be designated to help ensure and coordinate an effective span of control for the Unit Leader. The Information Specialist would focus on one particular aspect of the Unit's mission, e.g. development of the Information Collection Plan, data collection, data analysis, report production, etc. All unit positions are depicted in the organizational chart at left.

3. INFORMATION COLLECTION

The primary reason for gathering information is to *support Planning and decision-making.* Information collection is at the heart of virtually all Planning Section activities. Every other unit relies, to at least some extent, on information gathered and provided by the Situation Unit. Recognizing and appreciating the distinction between raw and corroborated information is essential to an effective unit operation. Raw or non-validated information is virtually useless as a decision making support tool. However, once that information has been analyzed and validated with or against other information, it becomes *credible.*

Clearly, planners and decision-makers would prefer to base their plans and decisions on analyzed and validated -- rather than unprocessed -- information. Therefore, the *collection* of information is merely the first step in a three-stage process; the Situation Unit must complete the process by systematically *analyzing and validating* that information. To be effective, information collection activities must be focused and purposeful and begin in the RRCC and NRCC and flow seamlessly to the MST. To ensure that information collection activities are synchronized with and support the needs of the Section and other ERT elements, the development of an Information Collection Plan (ICP) is essential. The basis of a sound and effective Information Collection Plan are the Essential Elements of Information (EEI). The final step in the process is to be sure that the information collected and analyzed by the Situation Unit is distributed in a timely fashion and in an appropriate format to those who need it for decision-making.

4. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION (EEI)

A. EEIs are a compilation of generic information goals that have been coordinated and established as a baseline for information gathering. Figure IV-2 depicts the 26 standard elements of information deemed essential to effective planning and decision-making in a *typical* disaster or emergency response. However, this list of EEI is by no means exclusive. This information should be available through the Operating Area or region EOC. Any type or element of information deemed essential to the field response effort should be considered a potential EEI candidate. For example, in a non-typical response, such as a terrorist release of a biological agent, the list of EEI might include:

1) *Epidemiological concerns* (such as the rate of affliction, or quarantine requirements),

2) *Mortuary concerns* (e.g., disposing of hundreds or thousands of deceased victims and/or deceased livestock).

3) *Spontaneous evacuation concerns* (e.g., the sudden flight of hundreds of thousands of people from threatened areas).

B. As a baseline reference, the EEI in Figure 2 is only a starting point for the Information Specialist. To achieve optimum effectiveness, the EEI must be narrowed and re-characterized (in the Information Collection Plan) as specific information *targets*. For example, *Status of Communications Systems* could be converted into the following three specific information targets: (1) Identify the percentage of customers without *local* telephone service; (2) identify the percentage of customers without *long-distance* service, and (3) provide a restoration timeline for local and long-distance telephone service.

C. The EEI in Figure 2 is divided among three general EEI categories: *Disaster Area, Assessment,* and *Response and Recovery.* The arrow to the left of each EEI represents the period of time that a specific EEI is expected to be most essential to Planning and decision-making. However, such applicability timelines are provided only for general planning purposes; *actual* EEI essentiality will always be situational and independently determined by the ERT.

Figure 6 - Essential Elements of Information (EEI)

PERIOD OF MAXIMUM VALUE			ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION
1 - 3 DAYS	4 - 10 DAYS	11 + DAYS	
Disaster Area EEI			
→	→		Boundaries of the Disaster Area
→	→		Access Points to the Disaster Area
→	→		Jurisdictional Boundaries
→	→		Social, Economic and Political Impacts
→	→		Hazard-Specific Information
→	→	→	Seismic and/or Other Geophysical Information
→	→	→	Weather Conditions/Forecasts
→	→	→	Historical and Demographic Information
Assessment EEI			
→			Predictive Modeling Impact Projections
→	→		Initial Needs and Damage Assessments
→	→		Status of Communications Systems
→	→		Status of Transportation Systems and Critical Transportation Facilities
→	→		Status of Operating Facilities
→	→		Status of Critical Facilities and Distribution Systems
→	→	→	Status of Energy Systems
→	→	→	Status of Critical Resources and Resource Shortfalls
Response and Recovery EEI			
→	→		Status of Emergency or Disaster Declaration
→	→		Major local, state and federal medical response resource deployed
→	→	→	Major Issues/Activities of other response activities
→	→	→	Key Federal and State Personnel and Organizations
→	→		Remote Sensing Activities
→	→	→	MST Commander Priorities
	→	→	Recovery Program Statistics
	→	→	Donations
→	→	→	Status of Upcoming Activities and Events
→	→	→	Status of Efforts Under Other Emergency organizations

D. The Information Specialist is responsible for managing and tailoring the EEI to MST requirements as part of Information Collection Planning. The Information Specialist should play a major role in the identification of new or changed EEI, for example, those received in JEOC and REOC. Information Specialists, as a result of their responsibility for evaluating and validating incoming information, are uniquely positioned to detect informational shortcomings or needs. To ensure a useful information collection effort, these requirements must be swiftly communicated to the coordinating Information Specialist, if assigned or Situation Unit Leader. Finally, the information needs of other MST sections and elements must be evaluated for inclusion in the information collection and distribution process.

E. EEI displays (either a poster depicting the standard EEI or an oversized Information Collection Plan) should be posted at conspicuous positions throughout the MST. In particular, try to post EEI displays near entrances, in the Operations Section, in the Situation Room, and in other prominent locations.

5. INFORMATION COLLECTION PLAN (ICP)

A. Information collection cannot be a passive activity. The Situation Unit must develop a strategy that *ensures* the collection of all information needed to support Planning and decision-making. That strategy is the *Information Collection Plan,* which not only identifies specific information requirements, but also designates functional responsibility for providing that information and to whom that information needs to be distributed.

1) The Information Collection Plan is also vitally important for managing expectations and managing time. In a large event there is a high need for information by JEOC. If a MST cannot meet a Request for Information, JEOC or EMSA personnel often will call the REOC or OA EOC themselves, causing confusion and duplicating effort. Yet in many cases, there are limitations on the timing of data gathering. A good ICP that gives firm data on when required information CAN and will be made available can be invaluable and will often “short-circuit” potential headquarters calls outside of the reporting chain by setting reasonable expectations of what can and cannot be done.

B. The Planning Section Chief can assign information collection tasks to any functional MST element, as well as specify when the required information is due. However, the most successful ICPs are developed as a cooperative effort between the Planning Section and other elements of the MST. Regardless of the designated information source, all incoming information will be routed through a Situation Status Unit and if possible one person. In addition, the Planning Section Chief in cooperation with the Situation Unit may need to conduct initial and periodic training in the use and function of the Information Collection Plan. Regardless of the size or makeup of the response and recovery organization, the Situation Unit must coordinate and publish a new or revised Information Collection Plan for the upcoming Operational Period.

C. The Information Collection Plan must be discriminating and concentrate on needed, rather than nice-to-have, information. The Situation Status Unit must avoid the tendency to become virtual data collectors that save every available scrap of informational debris. The prioritization of information flow is critical to the success of the Unit.

D. The four keys to establishing a dynamic and effective information collection Planning process are: *early implementation, continuous revision, aggressive collection, and effective distribution.* The Section Chief (and/or Situation Unit Leader) must introduce and implement the Information Collection Plan at the first MST staff meeting, and refer to an updated or revised plan at every staff meeting thereafter. MST elements will be more responsive as information providers (and the MST Commander will be more supportive of the Section's authority and processes) if they perceive the Section to be prepared, organized, and in control of the information collection process and not only receive the information they require in a proactive and timely fashion but get positive feedback from others on the information collection and distribution process.

1) Early Implementation. Personnel assigned to the MST positions as Planning Section Chief (and Deputy), Situation Unit Leader, and Information Specialist must be prepared to initiate and implement a comprehensive information collection and distribution program immediately upon joining the MST Prior to the first MST meeting, the Section Chief (or, if not yet deployed, the deputy or senior Situation Unit member) should immediately seek out the MST Commander and explain the information collection strategy, to include how the Plan will be introduced and managed – and in particular what event-specific information requirements should be added to the Information Collection Plan. Furthermore, if the JEOC is operational, contact should be made with the Emergency Medical Services Unit to determine what information is required or could be provided by the JEOC and ensure that these requirements are incorporated into the Information Collection Plan.

To assist in the introduction and implementation of such a program, each Situation Unit member should ensure that their personnel deployment kits or "go-kits" include the following:

a) Copies of a generic Information Collection Plan for use and distribution at the first staff meeting. This generic plan should include the standard EEI, as well as additional space for adding specific EEIs that are identified as important at the first MST staff meeting.

b) A poster-size copy of the generic EEI for use as a display during the initial staff and Planning Meetings. This display should be posted in a prominent position in the MST Situation Room, preferably near the MST Commander.

2) Continuous Revision. Information targets require constant revision to ensure they reflect current response priorities. Since the intelligence derived from information collection will be used for Planning and decision-making, the Information Collection Plan must be linked to -- and support -- Operational Period Incident Action Planning. This will require close and frequent coordination between the Situation Status Unit and the Demobilization Unit. The Information Specialist should attend all Incident Action Planning meetings to help facilitate this coordination.

3) Aggressive Collection. As previously indicated, information collection cannot be a passive enterprise. To assure an effective and sustained inflow

of needed information, the Information Specialist will need to aggressively manage the program. Aggressive, within this context, simply means the opposite of passive. Being aggressive does NOT mean being antagonistic, belligerent, combative, or offensive. It DOES mean being vigilant, helpful, attentive, organized, and visible. An Information Specialist must be able to balance the information needs of the Section and ERT against the operational requirements of a given (and potentially overburdened) information source.

4) Effective distribution. Once the information has been collected, it must be distributed to the users of it in a timely and efficient manner. Distribution of incoming information should take place within 30 minutes of receipt.

6. ANALYZING INFORMATION AND DEVELOPING INTELLIGENCE

Information is raw, pure data from virtually any source. However, such information -- although potentially valuable -- lacks a key element to utility: validation. If it has not been validated as accurate, credible, and relevant, information cannot be trusted as a basis for either effective Planning or sound operational decision-making. Value is realized only when an Information Specialist extracts, extrapolates, or derives usable intelligence from available information. This process of developing intelligence involves four main components: analysis, comparison, inference, and, authentication.

A. Analysis

Analysis means reading for content, and requires the ability to spot inconsistencies and anomalies within and between situational, operational, and statistical information. But it also requires a clear understanding of the big picture, to understand how information has impacted or is affecting current operations. To achieve optimum effectiveness, an Information Specialist must be extremely familiar with the disaster situation, response operations, and the Information Collection Plan. The Information Specialist’s role is to review all incoming information and identify irregularities and requirements.

B. Comparison

1) Information should be compared against other sources (when available), and/or against previously received, same-subject information. In both cases, the analyst is interested in validating the information as accurate and consistent with previously reported or laterally reported information.

2) One particularly useful comparative analytical tool is *trend analysis.* This form of analysis identifies emerging patterns of behavior or activity that may, will, or should affect MST operations or objectives, or leadership objectives.

C. Inference

Analysis does not always yield obvious or clear-cut intelligence. Often, an analyst must “read between the lines” in order to derive important conclusions or trends from otherwise routine information. However, deriving potential intelligence inferentially is NOT validation. Inference is merely a reasonable assumption based on analysis, and requires additional information collection to provide a sound basis for Planning and decision-making.

D. Authentication

Authentication is the positive verification that information is accurate. Once authenticated, information becomes intelligence. Authentication is achieved primarily through analysis, comparison, inferential resolution, and source accreditation.

E. Incident Action Plan Briefing

The Status Briefing provides a review of the status of items on the last Incident Action Plan. This briefing is presented during the staff meeting and is usually facilitated by the Planning Section Chief or Demobilization Unit Leader and is briefed by the responsible parties for the previous Incident Action Plan. The Demobilization Unit is responsible for providing the Situation Unit with the content of this briefing. This briefing will then be formatted by the Briefing Support Specialist if necessary.

7. THE SITUATION ROOM (SITROOM)

A. Purpose

The SITROOM functions as the primary *operational* information-dissemination facility within the MST. It is designed to serve as a multi-purpose meeting, planning, and briefing area; but should NOT be used as a training area or staff recreation room. Because the SITROOM will be used exclusively for operational purposes (e.g., Staff Meetings, Incident Action Planning Meetings, and special and executive briefings), it must be able to support the intended participants and audience. The Situation Unit Leader is responsible for maintaining and controlling access to the SITROOM. The Situation Status Unit has the responsibility for assuring that all displays (even those that are the responsibility of another unit or section) are posted in a timely manner and kept current.

B. Facility

The Situation Status Unit Leader (through the Planning Section Chief) must ensure the Logistics Section is aware of the requirement for a Situation Room prior to or during the MST standup phase. Ideally, the room will be located adjacent to or near the Planning Section and convenient for the MST Commander and Operations Section. The following represent recommended minimum requirements:

1) Size. Large enough to accommodate a center table (or series of tables) seating 12, with sufficient space along sides to seat (or stand) an additional 18 personnel. This size may have to be increased in a large activation where a multiple deploying teams need to receive their briefings.

2) Wall Space. A windowless room is preferred, to minimize distractions and maximize wall space for displays.

3) Lighting. Lighting should be capable of being reduced without being extinguished, thereby permitting the display of overhead transparencies or computer slideshows while providing enough illumination to take notes.

4) Furnishings. The list in Figure IV-9 represents the basic furnishing requirements needed to support an effective SITROOM. Additional requirements may be identified at the MST.

C. Configuration

1) The SITROOM must be configured to support and enhance meeting, briefing, and planning activities. Obstacles to effective communication (e.g., external noise sources, poor illumination) must be identified and removed, corrected, or minimized.

2) Since the SITROOM will be used throughout the operational period to conduct planning, meeting, and briefing activities, the Situation Unit must ensure that all displays are kept current. To assure currency and compatibility with the overall display strategy, all SITROOM displays will be coordinated with and cleared through the Situation Unit. Potential displays are described throughout this section.

D. Maintenance and Control

The Situation Status Unit is responsible for controlling access to the SITROOM, as well as for maintaining the SITROOM in proper order and condition. Control means managing access and configuration.

E. Management Aids

1) It is recommended that the Situation Unit develop visual aids to facilitate SITROOM management activities. Three examples follow.

a. SITROOM Scheduling Procedures. The procedures and criteria for scheduling the SITROOM should be posted just outside the entrance. The criteria should clearly state that the room is available only for regular or short-notice/ad hoc operational meetings, briefings, and planning sessions, and not for routine MST training activities. All authorized meetings and teleconferences should be included in the Meeting Schedule.

b. SITROOM Meeting Rules. This is a list of rules to minimize distractions during meetings. Activities such as side conversations (or cellular phone calls) should be forbidden. It is recommended that food and drink not be permitted in the SITROOM.

c. SITROOM Restoration Checklist. Any ERT element that schedules the room is expected to restore it to pre-meeting condition. This checklist should be provided to each individual coordinating use of the SITROOM, as well as posted just inside the SITROOM door. .

F. SITROOM Special Issues

1) It is important to coordinate the selection of the Situation Room location with Security and Logistics, particularly in WMD events or if there is a potential for operations under increased Homeland Security threat conditions. Under such conditions, there may be significant security issues related to the Situation Room in that this is the one location where the entire leadership of the organization is gathered at one time. Security issues can include closing blinds or covering over windows, removal of all packaging or empty shipping cases, and possible placement of the SITROOM in an interior location where it can be easily secured when not in use.

2) Another SITROOM consideration when operating under high threat conditions is not to have the entire succession listing for any given position present at the same meeting. If possible, have one person in the succession list away from the SITROOM so that they can assume command if something happens during the meeting.

Figure 7

SITROOM MEETING RULES
TURN OFF (OR SET TO VIBRATE) ANY CELLULAR PHONES OR PAGERS/BEEPERS
FOOD AND DRINK ARE NOT ALLOWED
NO SMOKING OR CHEWING/SPITTING
REFRAIN FROM SIDE CONVERSATIONS DURING MEETING
PLEASE NOTE ANY OUTDATED OR INCORRECT INFORMATION ON DISPLAYS AND BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PLANNING SECTION

SITROOM RESTORATION CHECKLIST
BEFORE LEAVING, ENSURE:
LITTER/DEBRIS HAS BEEN REMOVED OR PLACED IN WASTE RECEPTACLES
CHAIRS AND TABLES HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO THEIR ORIGINAL POSITIONS
COMPUTER/PROJECTOR HAS BEEN TURNED OFF
INCORRECT/OUTDATED WALL DISPLAY INFORMATION IS BROUGHT TO THE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF THE PLANNING UNIT

Figure 8
Sample MST Commander's Staff Meeting Agenda

California MST Commander's Meeting
State/Federal Disaster Number
MMDDYYYY @ HH:MM

1. Call to Order
2. Commander's Opening Remarks
3. Situation Status Briefing
4. Incident Action Plan Briefing
6. Operations Section
8. Logistics Section
9. Planning Section
10. Finance/Admin. Section
11. Safety/Liaison Officers
12. Others with Critical Issues
13. Daily Meeting Schedule
14. Commander's Closing Remarks

Meetings must be properly documented with meeting minutes that are a permanent record. It is the responsibility of the Documentation Specialist of the Documentation Unit to take and prepare minutes of major meetings, such as the MST Commander's Staff Meeting and the Planning Meeting. Situation Unit must assure that the Documentation Unit is aware of meetings where minutes are required and that table settings include room for the Documentation Unit Leader is in a location where they can hear the conversation and speakers.

G. Information Displays

Displays serve a number of purposes. Their primary function is to support decision-making. This involves characterizing information in a visual manner. Displays enable interested personnel to review static or dynamic information in a readily understandable format at a standard location and at a time convenient to them. By providing this service, displays also serve a secondary purpose: minimizing the recurring disruption of Planning Section activities by personnel seeking such information. Displays are also frequently used as referential visual aids in support of briefings and meetings.

1) SITUATION UNIT Maps

a. These maps reflect impacts to affected areas of a state, or identify the status of disaster operations, activities, or designations relative to individual jurisdictions. They may also identify the location of key facilities and teams.

2) Incident Action Plan

The preparation of the Incident Action Plan is a responsibility of the Demobilization Unit. However, the Situation Unit has the responsibility to post the plan in the Situation Room. Normally only the Incident Objectives (ICS-202) form will be posted.

3) Personnel and Team Status

These charts provide a snapshot of the number of state sponsored medial personnel deployed under the supervision of the MST. The Team Status Chart is designed to track the status of supporting response teams (CalMATs, Mobil Field Hospitals, individuals not in teams, etc.). The Operations Section is the source for information about response teams, but the Resource Unit has primary responsibility for tracking these and all other resources. Charts should reflect status information; Out of Service, Available, Assigned and location. Resource Unit is responsible for preparing and updating the display in coordination with Situation Unit. Examples of Personnel and Team Status displays are found in the Resource Unit Chapter.

8. MEETING SCHEDULES

Meeting Schedules should be established by the Situation Unit Leader as soon as possible after activation and be updated and distributed frequently. A well crafted meeting schedule is particularly valuable in imposing order on chaotic conditions in the initial response phase of a major disaster and can save valuable staff time and effort.

9. SUCCESSION LISTS

Keeping abreast of the current situation also includes maintaining current succession to command lists for all key Sections and staff elements. The compilation and use of succession lists assures that in a crisis the command and control function will be staffed to deal with the emergency or situation at hand.

A. Development

The Situation Unit Leader is responsible for this product. Consultation with the MST Commander and coordination with the Demobilization Unit Leader is essential for succession planning. The Demobilization Unit Leader may include, or at a minimum reference, the succession listing in the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that is developed early in the life of the MST. The MST Commander may have specific desires or issues associated with the succession listing, particularly for high level positions.

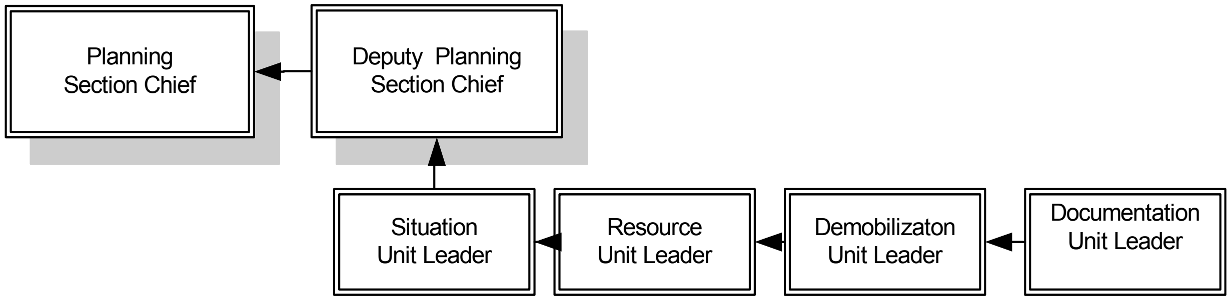
1) Succession lists at a minimum should be at least three deep. This allows enough redundancy to deal with staff movement and unforeseen factors. Not every position needs to be included in the succession list. Only the key functional areas essential to the command and control function in an emergency need to be listed.

2) Succession lists can be formatted in a variety of ways, but whatever method is selected it must be remembered that the list must be clear and concise to allow easy implementation in an emergency or crisis.

3) Succession lists are implemented only in an emergency and usually under the guidance provided in the COOP developed by the Demobilization Unit. It is critical that the protocols for implementation of the succession listing are approved by management and clearly understood by those covered by the succession listing. The most common reasons for implementing a succession list are:

a. The death or incapacitation of a person.
b. The inability to effectively communicate with a person.
c. The inability of a senior official to exercise efficient command and control due to their isolation or remote location.
d. For security reasons, succession lists should be protected and destroyed by crosscut shredding when no longer needed or superseded.

PLANNING Section Succession List



B. Shared/Common Drive Management

1) Although material stored on the MST Common Drive are not “record” material, quick access to the data is essential to effectively manage Planning Section activities. Personnel must know where to find data across shifts and over the long term as personnel rotate. Customers must know where they can find electronic copies of Planning Section products and where to submit input for Situation Reports and other products.

2) Situation Unit is responsible for establishing a folder structure on the Shared or Common Drive for Planning Section. In general, if the Section does not have a dedicated drive, folders on the Shared Drive which are not for general MST use should be password protected or otherwise distinguished from folders contain products for customers and for customer input.

3) Situation Unit should also encourage standard, easy to understand file naming conventions, preferably based on the system used for the subject line of messages transmitting Situation Reports and other documents. Although there is no mandatory naming convention, whatever one is used should make it easy to locate files, even if the creator is no longer available.

4) While it is permissible to create documents on one’s hard drive or portable drive or memory stick, the master copy of all Section files must be kept on the Planning Section Drive, if one is created, or on the Shared/Common Drive.

5) While such files are not “records” mandated for retention, as part of demobilization, Situation Unit should make an electronic copy of all Planning Section files on the Shared/Common and Planning Section Drives and send the copy to the EMSA/DMSD.

10. STAFF ACCOUNTABILITY & SAFETY

A. The Situation Unit Leader is delegated as the Fire/Safety Warden for the Planning Section and therefore must have a good working knowledge of safety and emergency plans. When offered, the Situation Unit members should avail themselves for general first aid, CPR, Automatic External Defibrillator, fire safety and other emergency response training.

B. The Situation Unit is normally located at the entrance to the Planning Section. As such, they are in the best position to keep staff sign-in and sign-out logs. It is critical that the Section Chief and Section Fire Warden (Situation Unit Leader) know who, by name, is in the Section at any given time and who may be out of the RRCC or MST for lunch, special field missions, meetings, and off duty time. The Situation Unit Leader is responsible for creating and maintaining a sign-in and sign-out log that is keep current. This list should be placed in a convenient location for Section personnel to log their comings and goings. In an emergency evacuation, the list should be taken by the Section Chief or Situation Unit Leader to the specified relocation point and used to take a roll call and account for all Planning staff. Missing staff members should be reported per the Safety and Fire Evacuation Plan.

III. Demobilization unit

1. MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The mission of the Demobilization Unit is to facilitate effective decision making by processing information and intelligence, identifying and anticipating problems, projecting future requirements, and managing MST planning to support MST Commander's objectives. Since NIMS/SEMS-ICS does not address production of the Strategic and Supporting Plans, these responsibilities have been assigned to Demobilization Unit to best balance the Section workload and to consolidate training requirements. The Demobilization Unit also carries out all duties of a standard NIMS/SEMS-ICS Demobilization Unit. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

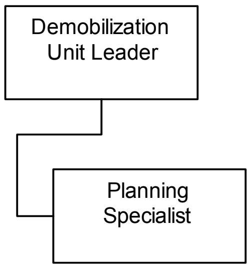
A. Coordinating for the Planning Section Chief the production of Incident Action Plans (IAP). Responsibility for creating the various ICS forms constituting the IAP remain as assigned in NIMS/SEMS-ICS.

B. Coordinating, facilitating, developing, and producing:
   1) COOP and Contingency Plan(s).
   2) Other Supporting Plans

C. Coordinating with Logistics Section, the check-out and release of Resources assigned to the incident.
   1) Producing and updating the Demobilization Plan

2. ORGANIZATION

Figure 1
Demobilization Unit



The Demobilization Unit consists of two functional positions, the Unit Leader and the Planning Specialist. The number of Planning Specialists assigned will depend on the scope of the incident. In large incidents, one or more of the Planning Specialists may be designated for coordination (one for Incident Action Planning, one for Supporting Plans, etc.) to better synchronize the efforts of the Planning Specialists. In larger disasters, a Clerical Specialist may be assigned. Staffing of individual positions will be determined by the magnitude and scope of the disaster and evolving requirements of the Planning Section supporting the MST.

3. PLANNING

A. Planning is an essential MST-wide activity. It is performed on a continuing basis by *all* MST elements and components during *every* stage of the emergency or disaster response. Planning supports short-range Actions, broader long-range goals, and specific requirements such as potential contingencies, Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP), transitioning procedures, or MST demobilization. Regardless of focus, the necessity for planning is apparent: actions and activities must be *validated* as necessary and *coordinated* with supporting and supported agencies. The Demobilization Unit is charged with ensuring that *all* planning is coordinated and supports the objectives established by the MST Commander. The baseline framework within which planning management and activity occurs is the Incident Action Planning Cycle.

B. Planning is a process. Effective and efficient planning has to involve those who will use and implement the output of the process – the plan. No planner, no matter how talented they may be, has the ability to anticipate every eventuality nor can they be expected to know all the potential problem solving options which might be considered for a plan. Only through meeting and coordinating with others can the knowledge base be expanded to explore the wide range of options and innovations available to the response and recovery effort. There are numerous additional benefits of the planning process:

1) Planning allows those who will implement response and recovery actions to meet each other prior to being called upon to function together in a crisis. Face to face familiarity has important benefits beyond the development of a paper document. The planning process should build working relationships.

2) Planning allows a rational exploration of the problems and alternative solutions. Rather than being forced to deal with knee jerk reactions to a

perceived crisis, planning meetings allow people to work under less pressure to truly discuss and explore the best solutions to the critical problem areas.

3) By participating in the planning process, people receive on-the-job training, and gain an intimate knowledge of the plan. As a result, confidence is gained in the plan and in the ability of those required to implement its elements.

4) Planning allows people to coordinate actions to reach a common goal. It is much easier to coordinate actions using a rational thought process in the relative quiet of the planning environment than being forced to respond on an individual ad hoc basis.

C. The functions of the Demobilization Unit go far beyond the creation of a paper document. Through the use of the planning process, the Unit has the ability to forge good working relationships that will provide benefits far greater than the plan itself.

D. The Demobilization Unit must recognize that to be successful, they must have excellent people skills and be able to manage the myriad of group dynamics that will be encountered. This requires flexibility and the recognition that the final plan is not the property of the Demobilization Unit but rather all those who contributed to its development and eventual implementation jointly own it.

4. INCIDENT ACTION PLANNING

A. As mandated by the SEMS the MST has adopted the Incident Command System for Incident Action Planning. To ensure effective coordination of multiple agencies and compatibility with the ICS procedures, terminology, and forms will be used to the greatest extent possible. Since these procedures are adequately covered in the ICS courses and in various ICS Field Operations Guides and Job Aids, only a brief outline of IAP procedures is included here.

B. Responsibility for creating the various sections of the Incident Action Plan remain as assigned under ICS. However, due to the multiple responsibilities of the Planning Section besides those mandated under ICS, Demobilization Unit has been delegated the responsibility of coordinating overall Incident Action Plan development for the Planning Section Chief. Following is the list of assignments for the various ICS forms:

Figure 9 Incident Action Plan Preparation Responsibilities

Form	Responsible	Comments
Incident Objectives (ICS-202)	MST Command Group	While the MST Commander is responsible, normally the Planning Section Chief will actually draft the objectives. This task may be delegated to the Demobilization Unit Leader.
Organization List (ICS 203)*	Resource Unit**	
Assignment List (ICS 204)	Resource Unit**	Based on decisions by the Operations Chief. After approval, to save paper, each ICS-204 may be distributed only to the tasked element or branch rather than to all plan recipients.
Communications Plan (ICS 205)*	Communications Unit	If a Communications Unit is not assigned, Demobilization Unit will coordinate the completion of this form.
Responder Medical Plan (ICS 206)*	Medical Unit	Normally prepared by the Medical Unit in coordination with the Medical Director.
Organization Chart (ICS 207)*	Resource Unit**	
Incident Map	Situation Unit	Only produced when appropriate. In many cases the map on the ICS-201 Incident Brief will suffice.
Other forms/plans		May be attached if appropriate
	** These forms do not have to be included with every IAP and may be added only when major updates*	*** In a small event where Resources Unit is not staffed, these forms will be completed by Demobilization Unit.*

Form	Responsible	Comments
	occur.	

5. THE OPERATIONAL PERIOD

A. An Operational Period is a specific time period that serves as the baseline for planning, coordinating and accomplishing operations and activities. The Operational Period duration (in days) is set by the MST Commander based on recommendations from the Operations Section Chief and Demobilization Unit Leader.

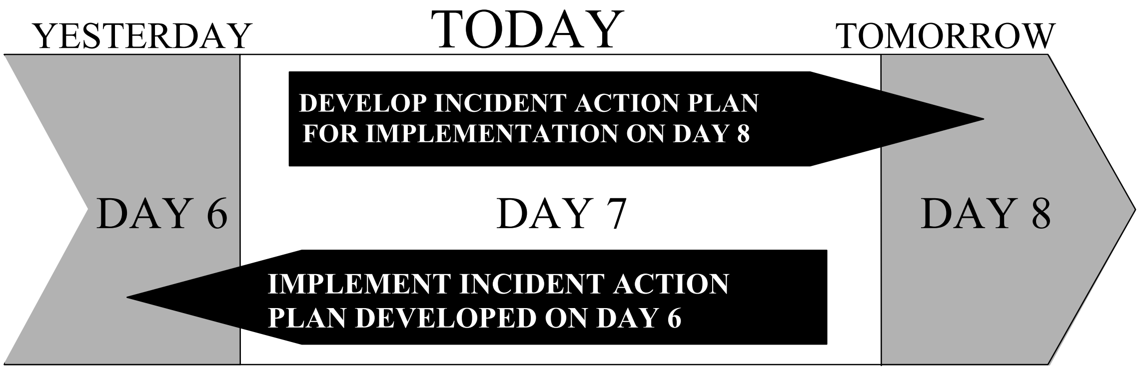
B. The base Operational Period is a single calendar day beginning at 00:01 and ending at 24:00 *local time.* No matter what the duration of the Operational Period in days, it will always begin at 00:01 and end at 24:00 *local time*. The MST Commander may adjust the times for the Operational Period, but normally a midnight-to-midnight period best balances operational requirements with reporting requirements, deployment constraints, and the need to coordinate with multiple agencies.

C. The Operational Period duration in days is based on the urgency of the disaster situation, and how often the response leadership needs to formally assess the status of response operations and activities. At the outset the Operational Period is likely to be a single calendar day. However it may be lengthened to 48 hours or more once the response operation enters the recovery phase.

D. A key aspect of Operational Period Incident Action Planning is that it takes place during the operational period *preceding* its application. For example, on D-Day + 7 (i.e., seven days after the disaster impact or declaration date), the MST will commence and conclude Incident Action Planning for D-Day + 8 (assuming a single calendar day Operational Period). However, the MST will be implementing the Incident Action Plan that was developed on D-Day + 6.

Because Incident Action Planning for the next Operational Period begins before the current Operational Period has ended, it is recommended that the Incident Action Planning Meeting be held as late in the Operational Period as operationally feasible. Ensure sufficient time is available to prepare, coordinate, and distribute the next Operational Period Incident Action Plan.

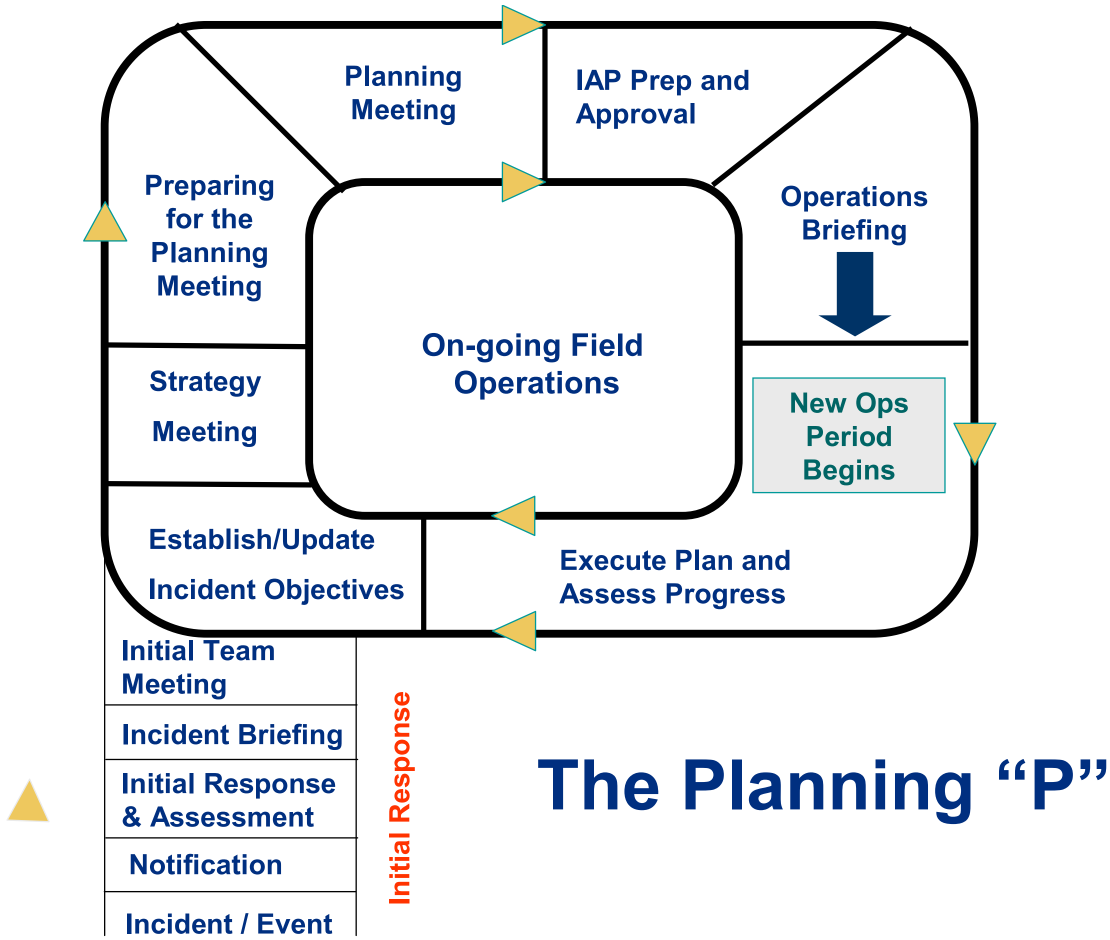
Figure 10 - MST Operational Period Activities



6. THE INCIDENT ACTION PLANNING CYCLE

The Incident Action Planning Cycle is essentially a recurring multi-step process that begins with the identification of objectives and concludes with the development and distribution of an approved Incident Action Plan. Note than in various versions of the IAP cycle, the number of steps may vary, however, the core procedures remain the same in all versions. All Sections and Command Staff elements must be involved in the process. In addition to the six-stage cycle, several additional one-time steps are taken at the beginning of an incident. The entire process is illustrated with the Planning "P" in Figure 4. The stem of the "P" represents one time actions taken at the beginning of an incident.

Figure 11 –Incident Action Planning Cycle



A. Step <u>ONE</u>: Establish/Update Incident Objectives

1) The Incident Action Planning cycle begins with the development of MST Commander's objectives. Objectives represent -- at a given time and point in the response effort - the key or critical interests of the Senior Official, and provide a unified direction for MST operations, activities, and strategies. Coordination between response elements is essential when objectives are set. For example, the Commanders of the deployed teams should be consulted when establishing MST Objectives.

2) Objectives are directions; they do not (necessarily) identify specific destinations. Their purpose is to ensure that response efforts are focused toward the resolution of high-interest concerns, without specifying the method. See Figure 2-5. Even though objectives are re-examined and revalidated on a daily basis, they may or may not change from Operational Period to Operational Period.

3) Objectives are documented on the Incident Objectives form (ICS-202). While production of the form is strictly the responsibility of the MST Commander, in almost all cases it will be completed by the Planning Section Chief or Demobilization Unit Leader. Figure 2-6 illustrates the Incident Objectives form.

Figure 12 - Key Incident Action Planning Elements

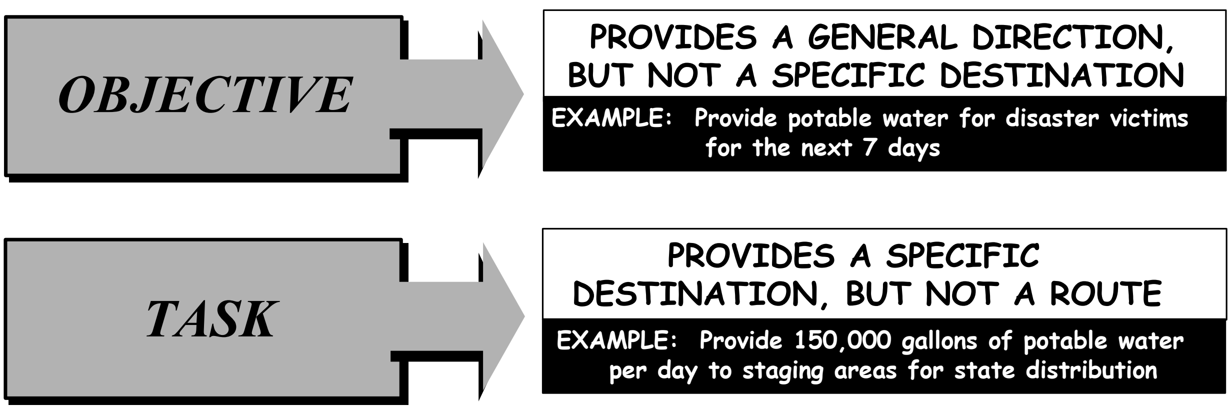


Figure 13 – Incident Objectives (MST-202)

A. INCIDENT OBJECTIVES	1. Incident Name	2. Date	3. Time
4. Operational Period			
5. General activities for the Incident.			
6. Weather Forecast for Period (Only if significant to Operations)			
7. General Safety Message (Only if significant to Operations)			

8.	Attachments (mark if attached)				
☐	Organization List - MST 203	☐	Medical Plan -MST 206	☐	(Other)
☐	Assignment Lists - MST 204	☐	Incident Map	☐	
☐	Communications Plan – ICS 205	☐	Traffic Plan	☐	

9. Prepared by (Planning Section Chief)	10. Approved by MST Commander	11.Approved by (State Coordinating Officer)

B. Step <u>Two</u>: The Strategy Meeting

1) Although the Incident Objectives provide staff with the MST Commander's objectives for the next Operational Period, they do not give insight into his or her preferred method of achieving these objectives. This additional guidance is provided through the Strategy Meeting.

2) The Strategy Meeting is normally informal and is attended by the MST Commander (and selected MST Command Staff), the Operations, Logistics, and Planning Section Chiefs. It may be held concurrent with or just after the objectives are set, at the morning Staff Meeting, or immediately thereafter.

The Strategy Meeting, the MST Commander provides additional guidance on how the various objectives are to be achieved, priorities among objectives, and similar matters so that senior staff can develop an effective Incident Action Plan to achieve those objectives. An effective strategy meeting will especially help the Operations Section Chief and Resource Unit Leader in developing the Assignment forms (ICS-204).

C. Step <u>Three</u>: Preparing for the Planning Meeting

1) The third step of the Incident Action Planning Cycle is the development of the tasks needed to achieve the objectives set in Step One. These tasks are developed at a separate meeting (or meetings) held during the day. The lead for most objectives is Operations. The Operations Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Resource Unit Leader will participate in most meetings. Additional staff may be invited by the lead to facilitate the development of the tasks. For example, in many instances External Affairs has a key support role in meeting an objective, Branch Directors or Team Commanders may also be invited as appropriate. However, the number of participants should be kept to the bare minimum necessary to develop the tasking.

2) The end product of this meeting should be a list of tasks that must be completed to achieve each objective. The list should include:

a. The Task – What has to be done during the Operational Period
b. Responsibility -- Who is in charge of completing the task
c. Resources-- What assets are specifically assigned to achieve the task
d. Guidance-- What general approach should be used to complete the task

3) The Planning Worksheet (ICS-215) is a valuable tool for documenting tasks and assigning resources. The Resource Unit Leader will maintain the ICS-215, but the Operations Section Chief (or other assigned lead) will determine how resources will be assigned. The form simply lists tasks to achieve an objective in the left column and required resources across the top. All relevant resources should be listed, since resources that are not assigned and used will become apparent and may be considered for demobilization or released to other disasters. In early response phase resources to be listed include CalMAT, Mobil Field Hospitals, and other teams; individuals deployed not as a team.

The Planning Worksheet should continue to be used in an incident as long as it is valuable in aiding effective planning.

4) In NIMS/SEMS ICS, the Planning Worksheet is a key tool in the Planning Meeting. After the Planning Meeting, the Resource Unit transfers tasks from the Planning Worksheet to the Assignment List forms (ICS-204). However, whenever time permits, the Assignment Lists should be drafted in advance of the Planning Meeting to save time, but more importantly, to allow review by Planning Meeting participants to ensure that the assignments, tasks, and resource allocations accurately reflect the intentions of the Operations Section Chief.

Figure 14 – Planning Worksheet (MST-215) (Compressed for display)

OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHEET	1. Incident Name	2.Date/Time Prepared	3. Operational Period (Date/Time)

			6. List Resource by Type (1, 2, 3 or 4) (Show Strike Team as ST)																							7. Notes	8. Reporting Location	9.Requested Arrival Time
4. Division/ Group or Other	5. Work Assignment (Task)	Resource																										
		Type																										
		Config.																										
		Required																										
		Available																										
		Needed																										
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		Required																										
		Available																										
		Needed																										
		Required																										
		Available																										
		Needed																										
10. Total Resources Required																												
11. Total Resources On Hand																												
12. Total Resources Needed																												

MST 215

D. Step <u>Four</u>: Planning Meeting

1) The fourth step of the Incident Action Planning Cycle is the Planning Meeting during which the tasks developed during Step 3 are collectively reviewed, reconciled and unified. Essentially, the Planning Meeting is where the various section or element leaders meet to outline and collectively unify their “to-do” lists for the next Operational Period and the MST Commander and MST Coordination Group confirm that their objectives for the next Operational Period will be met by the plan. All planning issues for the next Operational Period must be resolved at this meeting.

2) Attendance at the Operational Period Incident Action Planning Meeting is locally determined, but participation should be restricted to key functional area leaders and personnel. Because it is an operational meeting, attendance by observers and non-participants should be prohibited or discouraged. In large events or where MST’s may be activated in adjacent jurisdictions it may be valuable for the adjacent MST or JEOC monitor the Planning Meeting by teleconference. Ultimate decision authority, however, remains with the MST Commander and MST Coordination Group.

3) The Planning Section Chief facilities the Planning Meeting. In many cases, it is preferable for this responsibility to be delegated to the Demobilization Unit leader so that the Planning Section Chief can fully participate in planning discussions.

4) Facilitators must be forceful and professional. Keep the pace of the meeting fast and on target. Strive to complete the meeting in 30 minutes or less – but make sure that all issues have been covered.

5) Preparation for the Planning Meeting is important for ensuring the success of the meeting. The following items should be considered in preparing for the meeting.

a. The Planning Meeting should be scheduled for late in the day, but leaving sufficient time for the Planning Section to complete the Plan, obtain approvals, reproduce, and distribute the Plan before the start of the next Operational Period. A late meeting also allows MST leaders the opportunity to assess and factor the status of current Operational Period activities into their planning deliberations

b. The Planning Meeting should always be conducted in the Situation Room (SITROOM). Supporting displays are already available to support deliberations and discussion, and everyone should be familiar with the room's configuration. The use of additional visual aids can be an effective facilitating tool and in particular, the Planning Worksheet (ICS-215) should be reproduced in a large size using a page-enlarging device (such as a Pro-Image Enlarger or a Plotter-style Printer) and posted for easy reference. The Incident Objectives (MST-202) should also be reproduced and posted.

c. If the Resource Unit has had time to draft Assignment Lists (MST-204), these should be reproduced and distributed to participants. Indeed, if time permits, a complete draft plan with Incident Objectives (MST-202), Organization Assignment List (MST-203), Assignment Lists (MST-204) and other supporting forms should be distributed to facilitate discussion during the Planning Meeting.

d. It is beneficial to also reproduce and distribute the Planning Worksheet (MST-215).

e. Provide copies of the current Incident Action Plan to each meeting representative. Only the Incident Objectives and Assignment lists from the current plan need be reproduced.

f. Meeting agendas are valuable especially for the first few Planning Meetings.

6) Once the rules, agenda, and introductions have been made, the facilitator should quickly begin the meeting proper. The following meeting steps/activities mirror the agenda depicted in Figure 8.

a. <u>Situation Update</u>. The Operations Section Chief should give a succinct update on the situation and operations, focusing on events occurring since the morning Staff Meeting.

b. <u>Outline the Objectives</u>. These should be listed on the enlarged draft Incident Objectives, and in the handouts. Distinguish between new and carryover objectives. Ask the MST Commander if there are any additional last-minute objectives that haven't already been announced.

c. <u>Review Individually Developed Tasks</u>. The Operations Section Chief may conduct this review or may allow the facilitator to proceed. For each objective, read the supporting operational tasks *(every objective must be supported by at least one task).* These tasks should be listed on the Planning Worksheet (MST-215) posted in the Situation Room and in the Draft Assignment Lists (MST-204) if the Resource Unit has had the chance to produce them before the meeting. For each operational incident action:

i. Confirm the responsible section or element.

ii. Confirm that the proposed task does not conflict with any other tasks or activities.

iii. Confirm that any required cross-functional area support has been coordinated with the applicable element(s) both internal and external.

iv. In particular, ensure that any resources required to accomplish the task will in fact be available during the Operational Period. If resources will not be available, the task must be modified or delayed until resources become available. In the latter case, ordering and delivering of the requisite resources may itself become a legitimate task for the Operational Period.

v. Verify that the incident action actually supports the objective under that is listed.

vi. Ensure that all discrepancies are resolved before adjourning the meeting.

Figure 15 - Example Planning Meeting Agenda

AGENDA ITEM	TIME ALLOCATED	RESPONSIBLE
Meeting Rules and Agenda	**1 minute**	**Planning Section Chief or delegate**
Situation Update	**2 Minutes**	**Operations Section Chief**
Outline MST Commander's Objectives	**2 minutes**	**Planning Section Chief or delegate**
Review Individually Developed Tasks	**15 minutes**	**Operations Section Chief**
Identify Critical Issues and Requirements	**8 minutes**	**Planning Section Chief or delegate**
Agree on Final Objectives for Next Operational Period	**2 minutes**	**Planning Section Chief or delegate**
Adjourn	**TOTAL: 30 minutes**	

7) Identify Critical Issues and Requirements. Identify any critical concerns that impact, or may impact, completion of a planned objective or task. This can be accomplished either as a separate activity following the above action review, or in tandem with the above.

8) Agree on Final Actions for Next Operational Period. Once the group has reviewed all planned objectives and identified and dealt with any associated critical concerns, poll attendees to obtain a consensus.

9) Adjourn. No participant should ever leave a Planning Meeting feeling his or her concerns or issues were not addressed. However, the meeting must not be allowed to degenerate into a non-productive exchange of opinions or operationally irrelevant discussion. For those concerns that do not impact the objective development process, the facilitator should cut short the discussion and request that the issue be addressed and resolved after the meeting.

E. Step Five: Incident Action Plan Preparation and Approval

1) The fifth step of the Incident Action Planning Cycle is the development of the Incident Action Plan. The Incident Action Plan represents the culmination of a succession of the progressively more specific and detailed planning activities accomplished during stages one through three of the Incident Action Planning Cycle.

2) Following the Incident Action Planning Meeting, the Planning Specialist will complete and collate the plan. The draft plan discussed at the planning meeting will be corrected and updated as necessary to reflect decisions made during the Planning Meeting.

3) If the Resource Unit did not produce draft Assignment Forms (MST 204) before the Planning Meetings, it will do so immediately after the meeting based on the Planning Worksheet (MST-215), if used, and verbal directions and modifications made at the meeting.

4) If the Logistics Section has not ordered required resources based on the Pre-Planning Meeting, Resource Unit must coordinate with Logistics to ensure that the resources are ordered in a timely fashion and will arrive in time to achieve the objective or task within the Operational Period.

5) In NIMS/SEMS-ICS, Documentation Unit is responsible for collating, reproducing, and distributing the final Incident Action Plan. Due to the numerous non-ICS tasks assigned to Documentation Unit, Demobilization Unit, as the coordinator of all planning is responsible for these functions.

6) Once completed, the finished Incident Action Plan should be signed by the MST Commander.

7) The plan should be distributed to all MST Command and Staff elements responsible for executing or supporting any part of the plan. The JEOC and OA and Regional EOCs should also be provided copies so that they can properly support field operations and prioritize assignment of national level resources.

8) The Planning Specialist who collates the plan is not a planner, per se. Although the Planning Specialist is responsible for *preparing* the Incident Action Plan from the operational planning inputs provided by other sections and elements, this is largely an analytical packaging process, and involves little-to-no actual planning. The Planning Specialist's primary responsibilities within the Incident Action Planning process are to:

a. Carefully analyze the tasks of sections and elements, normally contained on the Assignment Form (MST-204) to ensure they are unified and support the objectives.

b. Identify any planning deficiencies or conflicts that require resolution.

c. Prepare a functionally integrated and thoroughly validated Incident Action Plan for the next operational period, using the appropriate set of ICS forms.

F. Step <u>Six</u>: Operations Briefing

1) A simple, but important part of Incident Action Planning is the Operational Brief which should be given immediately before the start of the Operational Period. Where a MST is not conducting 24 hour operations, the briefing may be given either before close of business on the previous evening or at the very beginning of the work day during the operational period.

2) The Operational Briefing is normally conducted by the Operations Section Chief, although the Situation Unit Leader may give a weather and situation update at the beginning of the briefing. Each attendee should already have received the written Incident Action Plan including applicable Assignment Forms (MST-204). The briefing should bring all participants up to date on any changes since the plan was issued, modifications to the plan, and where useful, the overall concept of operations through which the objectives and tasks are unified.

G. Step Seven: Execute Plan and Assess Progress

1) Once the Incident Action Plan has been approved, it becomes an order for staff to execute beginning with the start of the next Operational Period. Where large resource requirements are needed to achieve the objectives, many of these resources will have to be ordered before the beginning of the Operational Period in order to arrive in time to allow achieving the objectives.

2) Progress in achieving objectives is assessed in several ways. The Demobilization Unit Leader or Planning Specialist must work closely with the Situation Unit to collect progress reports on the Incident Action Plan at the close of every Operational Period. Sections and elements should always report on assigned incident action planning activities as part of routine submissions for the Situation Report.

Figure 16 – Assignment List (MST-204)

ASSIGNMENT LIST	1. Branch or other Lead	2. Division/Group
3. Incident Name	4. Operational Period Date: Time:	

5. Key Personnel	Name	Affiliation	Contact #(s)
Operations Section Chief:			
Branch Director:			
Division or Group Supervisor:			

6. Resources Assigned this Period

Strike Team/Task Force/ Resource Designator	Leader	Number Persons/ Items	Trans. Needed	Begin Task Time/Location	End Task Time/Location

7. Tasks to Support Objective

8. Special Instructions

9. Division/Group Communication Summary: Key Contacts

Name/Organization	Radio: Freq./System/Channel	Telephone	E-mail

10. Prepared by (Resource Unit Leader)	11. Approved by (Planning Section Chief)	12. Date	13. Time

3) The formal assessment of IAP progress is normally made at the morning Staff Meeting. The Planning Section Chief should conduct the IAP review portion of the Staff Meeting but may delegate this

responsibility. The Planning Section Chief reviews the previous Operational Period objectives and tasks. Command and General Staff elements assigned the lead for objectives will report out on the progress achieved. Normally, the Operations Section Chief is the lead for most objectives, but may delegate reporting responsibility to the applicable Branch Director, Division Supervisor, or Group Supervisor. Since tasks supporting an objective should be completed within a single operational period, if a task is not completed, the lead should be prepared to recommend corrective action. If an objective has been achieved, it will, with the MST Commander's permission be removed from the plan. If it has not, it will remain on the IAP until achieved.

4) In facilitating the IAP review section of the Staff Meeting, the Planning Section Chief must ensure that the tasks completed in fact contribute to achieving the assigned objective. If the objective does not appear to be achieved, this should be noted and the objective continued to the next Operational Period.

5) Although the formal assessment of the IAP takes place at the staff meeting, leads for objectives should take immediate corrective action if it appears that a task or objective will not be achieved. In general there are only three alternatives: add resources, extend the time allotted for completing the task or modifying the objective or task.

7. THE INCIDENT ACTION PLANNING SCHEDULE

A schedule of Operational Period Incident Action Planning activities and timelines must be established and articulated to all sections and elements. Everyone at the MST should be aware of and understand the schedule of planning activities. A standard, baseline schedule for planning (based a single calendar day 24-hour Operational Period) is provided below. However, this is merely a recommendation. Incident Action Planning Schedules must ultimately be based on a number of situational factors, including logistic ordering considerations, synchronization with JEOC and/or OA/RE EOC schedules, etc.

A.	Establish Incident Objectives	Before or during morning Staff Meeting
B.	Strategy Meeting	Just before, during or immediately after the morning Staff meeting
C	Preparing for the Planning Meeting	Between Staff meeting up to about an hour before the Planning Meeting. If significant resources must be ordered to achieve the objectives, the meeting should be held early in the day, possibly immediately after the Staff Meeting.

D.	Planning Meeting	Late in the Operational Period. Between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M. normally is suitable, however at least and hour or two must be left before close of business for the final preparation and publication of the plan.
E	Operations Briefing	Immediately before the start of the Operational Period. If the MST is not operating on a 24 hour basis, the brief may be given before close of business or at the very beginning of the work day.
F.	Assessing Progress	Progress is normally assessed at the morning Staff meeting, but senior leaders should be informed if any major problems appear before that time and briefed on proposed corrective actions.

8. Incident Action Planning Pitfalls

There are several planning pitfalls that can severely hamper the Incident Action Planning process. The Demobilization Unit Leader and Planning Specialist must be keenly aware of these items and avoid them at all costs.

A. Lack of support – Upper level support, particularly at the early stages of the planning effort is essential for success. The support of the MST Commander must be actively sought and affirmed during the planning process.

B. Too many objectives – If everything becomes an objective, then nothing is an objective. While there are no set guidelines on the number of appropriate objectives for a given emergency event, most disasters will have three to six objectives and catastrophic or major events may have around 6 objectives during the height of operations.

C. Insignificant Incident Actions – Incident Actions should be clearly measurable and related to the objective they are designed to address. But Incident Actions should not be broken down to such minor levels that they become insignificant in the accomplishment of the objective. Focus on those incident actions that are significant and essential to the attainment of the objective.

D. As a *planning* document, the Incident Action Plan should *not* be used to list the status of objectives from the previous Operational Period. Such information should instead be listed in the Daily Intelligence Summary and Situation Brief.

9. COOP PLANNING

A. The Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is a specific type of contingency plan. A COOP ***must*** be created for every MST and ideally is ready for implementation upon occupation of the MST. This requires that coordination for effective COOP planning begin in the JEOC. The COOP describes the how the MST will deal with an increased threat level of the Homeland Security Advisory System and, if necessary, relocate, maintain essential operations, and reconstitute its operation. The Demobilization Unit Leader should obtain the latest directives and policies on the procedures and steps to be taken in response to an increased HSAS level. The format for a MST COOP plan is the same as the generic Supporting Plan template shown in Figure 10.

B. The COOP process should begin in the Operational Area and Region. When Logistics, Safety, Security, and other staff are deployed to identify the site for the MST, they should be instructed to be alert and identify alternate sites for the possible relocation of the MST if necessary.

C. The Planning Specialist should work closely with the Situation Unit to ensure that all of the required succession to command information is promptly obtained from all sections and elements. In addition, a working relationship must be established with the Staff responsible for maintaining contact and lodging information on all MST personnel.

D. The Planning Specialist should work closely with the MST Commander or his or her designee during the creation of the COOP plan. It must be recognized that the COOP process raises a number a sensitive issues that require a close working relationship with the MST Commander.

E. Reconstitution of an MST should follow, wherever possible, the same procedures that were used to deploy it in the first place. It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel for COOP actions.

F. COOP documents contain sensitive information and should be handled as such. They usually have limited distribution to select MST staff on a need to know basis. The COOP Plan is usually protected as Official Use Only information. As such, it must be properly marked, handled and secured. *The Planning Section Chief has the authority to approve the designation of the COOP as FOUO.*

Figure 17 Possible COOP/Contingency Plan Annexes

A. Succession to Command Listing(s)	
B. Continuity of Critical Operations	May be included in Concept of Operations
C. Relocation Procedures	May be included in Concept of Operations
Checklists and Responsibilities 1. Commander & Command Staff 2. Operations Section 3. Logistics Section 4. Planning Section 5. Finance/Admin. Section	If Annex is used, include as Appendix
D. Reconstitution Procedures	May be included in Concept of Operations
Checklists and Responsibilities 1. Commander & Command Staff 2. Operations Section 3. Logistics Section 4. Planning Section 5. Finance/Admin. Section	If Annex is used, include as Appendix
E. Relocation Sites	
F. Telephone Contact Lists	

G. DEMOBILIZATION PLAN.

1) A demobilization plan outlines a coordinated process for reducing resources as operational requirements permit and releasing them for reassignment or return to readiness for deployment. The demobilization plan focuses on reducing MST staffing to functionally necessary levels and, ultimately, closing the MST.

Because demobilization affects every area and involves every individual of the MST, the Demobilization Unit should commence demobilization planning as soon as possible. In general, this planning need not begin in earnest until after the immediate response stage has ended, and long-term disaster response and recovery implications and requirements are better understood.

2) It is important to note that the Planning Section is responsible for coordinating the *development* of the Plan, but the Logistics and Finance/ Admin. Sections will be the primary agents for *implementation.* It is imperative, therefore, that knowledgeable representatives from both the Logistics and Finance/Admin. Sections are fully involved in and throughout the demobilization planning process. The Demobilization Unit must also ensure the host Region is involved in the process, particularly if the MST is largely staffed with non-host Region personnel.

3) The following are the minimum components of a demobilization plan:

a. A demobilization timeline reflecting planned/scheduled milestones.

b. A phased functional staffing pattern based on and linked to the demobilization timeline.

c. A list of key demobilization actions and requirements that must be completed by each functional area.

d. A list of key MST or other facility closure actions and requirements that must be completed by each functional area.

4) A demobilization plan need not be separately developed if the appropriate planning is fully integrated in the MST Strategic Plan.

IV DOCUMENTATION UNIT

1. MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The mission of the Documentation Unit is to produce and maintain documents that support Emergency Response Team and Regional Support Team activities and requirements and disaster operations as a whole. Primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

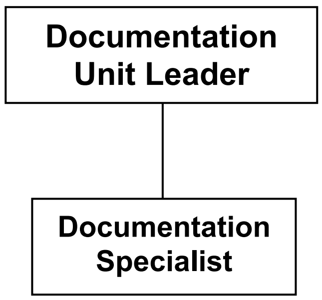
A. Production of recurring documents (e.g., Situation Reports and SITREP Updates).

B. Production of ad hoc and reference documents.

C. Maintenance of an up-to-date records management system.

2. ORGANIZATION

Figure 18
Documentation Unit



The Documentation Unit consists of two functional positions, the Unit Leader and the Documentation Specialist. The number of Documentation Specialists assigned will depend on the magnitude and scope of the disaster and evolving requirements of the Planning Section.

3. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

A. The primary method of sharing information is the *Situation Report (SITREP) and the SITREP Update*, both of which are prepared by the Documentation Unit. The SITREP is a summary of activity occurring over the most recent operational period (OPeriod), with a special emphasis on analysis of information rather than rote reporting of data. The SITREP is specifically targeted to elements outside MST, most notably EMSA decision makers.

B. The Documentation Unit also maintains documents and Planning Section records which may include sensitive information. Records kept and maintained by the Unit can be subpoenaed in legal actions, particularly those involving terrorist related events or requested under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). It is essential that the required records are kept and maintained in full accordance with agency policies and procedures. As an inherent element of all record keeping activities, the Planning Section must maintain accurate documentation of disaster activity and be able to rapidly retrieve and disseminate the information contained in those records.

4. REPORTING

A. Situation Report

1) The SITREP is used to provide EMSA decision-makers with a regular, comprehensive, accurate overview of significant operations, activities, actions, plans, and issues relative to a disaster or emergency.

2) The key to good SITREPs is to provide decision-makers with current, critical event reporting. That reporting must include an analysis of raw data to provide them with *information* vs. rote data and figures. The key question to answer with any data set is: *What does it mean?* Good situation reporting requires a high level of cooperation between the Situation and Documentation Units.

B. SITREP Inputs & Submissions

1) SITREP elements and inputs should be accurate, concise, current, and address critical issues of importance to upper level decision-makers. It is particularly important that activities related to the achievement of Incident Action Planning items be included in SITREP submissions.

2) In order to properly track and archive SITREPs it is essential that the proper numbering format be coordinated and followed by the MST. It is critical to have number the SITREPs in numerical order.

3) A SITREP must be submitted for every OPeriod. In order to maintain the relevancy of the SITREP, this should be completed as soon as possible after the conclusion of the OPeriod. In order to effectively process and distribute information contained in the SITREP, the document should arrive at the JEOC and OA/R EOC no later than 2000 PT.

4) However, if the MST is not working on a 24-hour shift, it is usually not necessary to have the Documentation Unit extend their normal working hours to produce the Situation Report. Submissions can be made based upon anticipated achievements during the current OPeriod and the Documentation Unit can work inputs into the Situation Report during normal hours. Any significant changes to the report can be adjusted as necessary, but these should be an exception rather than the rule for processing. The report can then be submitted at the close of the workday as if it was submitted at the actual end of the OPeriod. If anything else significant happens during the OPeriod after the MST closes, it can be reported early in the morning in a Situation Report Update.

5) Situation Reports are transmitted to the JEOC via e-mail for distribution to the SOC, OA and R EOCs. It is important to properly identify the e-mail transmission of a Situation Report. The subject line for the e-mail transmission of a RRCC Situation Report should read: *MST-SITREP#XX.* Example: MST-SITREP #03. The subject line for the e-mail transmission *MST-SITREP #XX*.

C. Special Instructions

1) Do not delay the reporting of significant situational information merely for the sake of inclusion in the SITREP. Situational disaster information that merits the *immediate* attention of the JEOC or EMSA should be immediately forwarded to the JEOC via a SITREP Update.

2) When reporting times, use a 24-hour clock and identify the local time zone (e.g., 4:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time would be reported as “1630 PST”).

3) *Do not* use entries such as “same as previous report” or “no change.”

4) Be sure that the report contains information on achievements related to objectives assigned in the Incident Action Plan.

5) SITREPs should be in narrative format using an analysis of the reporting data. Do not complete SITREPs in bullet format.

6) Do not use names and telephone numbers in the SITREP, other than as specifically required by the SITREP format. Exception: the names of elected officials preceded by their appropriate title may be used without restriction.

7) Do not use logos, seals, graphics, or pictures in the SITREP. These greatly increase the size of the transmitted report to headquarters. During periods of increased threat levels, mailbox size may be reduced and prevent the transmission of the report. Since it is unknown when increases in threat levels will take place or a virus outbreak will require the reduction in mailbox size, these adornments should not be included in the report

8) It is critical that the SITREP does not contain conflicting information between reporting sections or elements. Conflicts should be caught and solved by the Situation Unit, but if found by the Documentation Unit they must be addressed before the release of the report.

9) The information required by and collected in the SITREP is often sensitive and meant for internal use only; as a result, SITREPs are not to be disseminated outside official channels.

10) In WMD, special events, or terrorist threats, SITREPS must be reviewed to be sure that compromising information on facilities, future actions, or similar sensitive data is not contained in the SITREP. For high security concerns, the Documentation Unit Leader and Planning Section Chief should consult with the MST Commander to evaluate the need for designating the report “For Official Use Only.”

11) The Planning Section Chief must review and approve a SITREP prior to distribution.

12) The original signed copy of the SITREP is a record and must be handled and filed as official historical records. These records will be returned to California EMSA/DMS at the conclusion of the MST deployment.

D. SITREP Update

1) The SITREP Update is used to provide a brief, situational update of response activities between scheduled SITREP submissions. Often, the Planning Section will be asked to submit a SITREP Update to provide current operational information to the JEOC to support preparations for briefings or phone conferences. However, as a rule, SITREP Updates should be prepared and submitted whenever and as soon as the MST becomes aware of significant information that may merit immediate national interest.

2) Submission Guidelines:

a. Method of transmission is e-mail (primary) or Fax (secondary). The JEOC will distribute e-mailed SITREP Update. MST should flag the e-mail “urgent”.

b. SITREP Updates are numbered using the previous SITREP number followed by an alphabetical character. Therefore, an update issued after SITREP 14 would be identified as SITREP Update 14-A. If a second update were necessary, it would be given number 14-B.

V. Technical Specialist Unit

1. MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Technical Specialists provide expertise and skills not normally present at MST but are required for mission accomplishment.

A. Because of the complexity and/or size of a particular incident, it may become necessary to ask for the assistance of a technical expert. It is the common task of the Technical Specialist to provide expertise in the area of interpreting acquired data and how best to present that data. Technical Specialists are assigned to the Planning Section under the direct supervision of the Planning Section Chief. Many of these Specialists will actually be detailed to various Operations Branches for day to day work, but general administrative oversight remains with the Planning Section. Technical Specialists are not meant to replace subject matter experts located elsewhere in the organization.

2. MANAGING TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS

When a Technical Specialist arrives at the MST he or she should do a check-in with Resource Unit. The Planning Section Chief or Technical Specialist Unit Leader (if one has been appointed) will then assume management responsibility.

A. If a Technical Specialist is detailed to another Section, he or she should be instructed to report through Planning Section for administrative matters.

B. The Planning Section Chief will closely coordinate with the Section to which a Technical Specialist is assigned to assure that the person is fully tasked and that when all assigned tasks are complete is returned to Planning Section for demobilization.

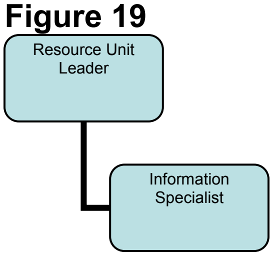
VI. RESOURCE Unit

1. MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The mission of the Resources Unit is to track and maintain continuity on the status of all operational actions and resources, including personnel, teams, and "critical commodities" from check-in through demobilization. Primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

A. Analyze, validate and display Critical Resources Status (personnel, teams and critical commodities).
B. Provide status on Incident Resources through the Incident Collection Plan.
C. Provide trend, demand/supplies analyses with Logistics
D. Coordination of employee check-in at MST and field sites
E. If requested, serve as check-in clerk at staging areas and distribution points

Figure 19



2. ORGANIZATION

The Resources Unit consists of a Unit Leader and if necessary Information Specialist position(s). As always, staffing of individual positions will be determined by the magnitude and scope of the disaster Unit positions are depicted in the organizational chart (Figure 3-2)

3. CRITICAL RESOURCE TRACKING

Although other sections may have primary responsibility for obtaining or tasking resources, the Resources Unit is the center point in the MST for tracking and displaying resources. The Resources Unit tracks information pertaining to resources and provides timely data such as the current status and location of critical resources and teams. Resources Unit provides products and displays in accordance with the Information Collection Plan and distributes them via the Situation Unit and subsequently to the Demobilization Unit. Via SITREP and other operational reporting products, resource-specific information is made available in a timely and operationally useful manner and format.

4. DEPLOYMENT STATUS

The responsibilities for resource tracking at the MST are somewhat different from those of the Resources Unit at the incident level. Resources Unit tracks ICS type resources (individual resources, CalMAT, Mobile field Hospitals etc.) and items designated as critical commodities.

This chart should reflect the acquisition, transportation, and distribution status of needed critical resources. The Logistics Section is the primary source of this information; however, the Operations Section is an alternate source of information Even though other MST elements are responsible for providing the required information, the Resource Unit retains responsibility for analyzing, preparing, posting, and updating the display. An example Critical Resource Status display follows at Figure 2.

5. CRITICAL COMMODITIES

The Resources Unit coordinates with the Logistics Section to produce resource analyses of critical commodities. These analyses such as critical commodities, critical paths, and commodity flow compliment and enhance the resource and commodities tracking tasks, functions, and responsibilities of the Logistics Section.

Logistics tracks all commodities. What is a critical item is incident dependent and should be designated by the MST Commander and Operations Officer early on. In most large incidents food water, medical supplies and pharmaceuticals will be designated as critical.

Figure 20 - Critical Commodities Status Display

CRITICAL COMMODITIES STATUS

ITEM DESCRIPTION	REQUIRED	ORDERED	ETD/POD	ETA/POA	ON HAND	DISTRIBUTED TO TEAMS
GENERATORS; 40-100KW	*5*	*5*	*9/30/01 TLC-EAST*	*9/30/01 MST*	*0*	*10*
Drugs (see team lists)	*10*	*10*	*9/27/01 JEOC*	*9/28/01 Direct to teams*	*2*	*0*
MREs	*180 cases*	*11 cases*	*10/02/01 OA EOCL*	*10/10/01 MST*	*20*	*46*

PRODUCT OF PLANNING SECTION
DATA PROVIDED BY MULTIPLE SOURCES

CURRENT AS OF:

6. PERSONNEL AND TEAM STATUS

This chart provides a snapshot of the number of State deployed personnel involved in the response effort. The primary sources for this information will be the ESR-VHP Staffing report and MST Deployed Pending Check-In report, both available from the MST Finance/Administration Section. The Team Status Chart is designed to track the status of supporting response teams. The Operations Section is the source for information about response teams. Charts should reflect whatever status information is important to the MST Commander and the local EOCs that the MST is supporting. The Resource Unit is responsible for preparing and updating the display. Refer to Figure 3 for an example Status of Teams Chart.

Figure 21 - Status of Teams Chart

STATUS OF TEAMS					
TEAM	**HOME BASE**	**STATUS**	**DEPLOYED LOCATION**	**DATE DEPLOYED**	**ESTIMATED RETURN DATE**
MST	Sacramento	DEPLOYED	Long Beach	9-18	
Cal Mat 1	San Diego	ON ALERT	-----		
Cal Mat 2	San Francisco	DEPLOYED	Los Angeles	9-20	
Cal Mat 2	Sacramento	DEPLOYED	Los Angeles	9-20	
Mobile Hospital 1	Sacramento	ON ALERT	-----		

PRODUCT OF PLANNING SECTION Current As Of:

7. ORGANIZATION CHARTS

A. Organization Charts are used to graphically display the response organization. They are very useful in showing the organizational structure and interrelationships between various elements.

B. The Resource Unit is responsible for preparing an Organization Chart down to Branch/Unit Level for the MST. The Organization Chart prepared by the Resources Unit does not have to illustrate every person assigned or deployed. The Organization Chart should be reviewed and updated frequently, particularly when major organizational transitions are taking place.

C. Organization charts should be distributed to Section Chiefs, group and element leads, and senior staff. It does not and should not be distributed to every member of the MST or deployed teams. The Organization Chart is an internal document and does not have to be transmitted elsewhere unless requested.

D. Organization charts must contain a current date and a notation that the charts must be destroyed by shredding when no longer needed, with the exception of the Planning Record copy kept in the files.

8. SUPPORTING INCIDENT ACTION PLANNING PROCESS

Planning Resources Unit fully supports the Incident Action Planning Process, including assisting with the preparation of the Assignment Form (MST204) and, as required the Planning Worksheet (MST 215).

ASSIGNMENT LIST	(1) INCIDENT	FORM MST – 204 08/06

# (2) DISASTER RESPONSE NUMBER:	/ (3) LOCATION:	(4) DATE/TIME PREPARED:

(5) Group Supervisor **(6) Operational Period:**	

RESOURCES ASSIGNED THIS PERIOD

TEAM	LEADER	NUMBER PERSONS	TRANS NEEDED	TO	RETURN

(8) <u>OPERATIONAL ASSIGNMENT</u>:

(9) <u>SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS</u>:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="10">COMMUNICATIONS SUMMARY</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">B.FUNCTION</td><td>FREQUENCY</td><td>SYSTEM</td><td>CHANNEL</td><td colspan="2">C.FUNCTION</td><td>FREQUENCY</td><td>SYSTEM</td><td>CHANNEL</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">COMMAND</td><td>LOCAL</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td rowspan="2">D.SUPPORT</td><td>LOCAL</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>REPEAT</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>REPEAT</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">DIVISION/GROUP TACTICAL</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">DIVISION/GROUP TACTICAL</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">(15) PREPARED BY: Signature</td><td colspan="5">Page of</td></tr>
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ASSIGNMENT LIST (MST FORM 204)

Purpose. The Assignment List(s) is used to inform Operations Section personnel of incident assignments. Once the assignments are agreed to by the Federal Coordinating Officer (MST COMMANDER)/Team Leader and General Staff, the assignment information is given to the appropriate Units and Divisions.

Preparation. The Assignment List is normally prepared by the Resources Unit using guidance by the Incident Objectives (MST Form 202), Operational Planning Worksheet (MST Form 215), and Operations Section Chief. The Assignment List must be approved by the Planning Section Chief. When approved, it is attached to the Incident Objectives as part of the Incident Action Plan.

Distribution. The Assignment List is duplicated and attached to the Incident Objectives and given to all recipients of the Incident Action Plan.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHEET	1. Incident Name	2. Date/Time Prepared	3. Operational Period (Date/Time)

4. Division/ Group or Other	5. Work Assignment (Task)		6. List Resource by Type (1, 2, 3 or 4) (Show Strike Team as ST)																								7. Notes	8. Reporting Location	9. Requested Arrival Time
		Resource																											
		Type																											
		Config.																											
		Required																											
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10. Total Resources Required																													
11. Total Resources On Hand																													
12. Total Resources Needed																													

Instructions for Completing the Operational Planning Worksheet (MST Form 215).

ITEM NUMBER	ITEM TITLE	INSTRUCTIONS
1.	Incident Name	Print the name assigned to the incident.
2.	Date/Time Prepared	Prepared Enter date (month, day, year) and time prepared (24-hour clock)
3.	Operational Period	Enter the time interval for which the information applies. Record the start time and end time and date(s).
4.	Division or Other	Enter the Division letter or location of the work assignment for the resources
5.	Work Assignments	Enter the specific work assignments given to each of the Divisions.
6.	Resource	Complete resource headings, both for kind, type and configuration appropriate for the incident. Enter, for the appropriate resources, the number of resources by type required and the number of resources available to perform the work assignment. Then record the number of resources needed by subtracting the number in the available row from the number in the requested row.
7.	Notes	
8.	Reporting Location	Enter the specific location the "needed" resources are to report for the work assignment (staging area, MST, etc.)
9.	Requested Arrival Time	Enter time resources are requested to arrive at the reporting location.
10/11/12	Total Resources Required On Hand, Needed	Enter the total number of resources by type required, on hand, and needed

OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHEET (MST FORM 215)

Purpose. The purpose of the Operational Planning Worksheet is to communicate the decisions made during the Planning Meeting concerning resource assignments to the Resources Unit. The Worksheet is used by the Resources Unit to complete Assignment Lists and by the Logistics Section Chief for ordering resources for the incident.

Initiation of Form. The Operational Planning Worksheet is initiated by the MST COMMANDER/Team Leader and General Staff at each Planning Meeting. It is recommended that the format be drawn on the chalkboard, and when decisions are reached, the information is recorded on the Operational Planning Worksheet.

Distribution. When the division work assignments and accompanying resource allocations are agreed to, the form is distributed to the Resources Unit to assist in the preparation of the Assignment Lists. The Planning Section will use a copy of this worksheet for preparing requests for resources required for the next operational period.