

## Community Emergency Response Team









### CERT Organization

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## Community Emergency Response Team


-  Personal safety is **ALWAYS** the number one priority
-  Show up prepared
  - Wear appropriate clothing and footwear, have **WATER**
  - Wear PPE - your personal protective equipment ...gloves, helmet, goggles, mask, boots, etc.
  - Have at least one communications device: cell, radio, etc.
-  Work as a team
-  Size-up - maintain situational awareness
-  The CERT goal is to do the **Greatest Good for the Greatest Number**
-  *Hope for the best but plan for the worst!*

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1

### Unit Objectives & Topics

-  The emergency management structure (Incident Management System)
-  How CERT members can fit into a larger emergency response and recovery structure (CERT Organization)
-  Why, what, and how CERTs document their activities



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2

### Need for CERT Organization

-  Individual CERT members may operate as part of organized CERT units or as part of a larger emergency response effort
-  Larger emergency responses typically require multi-agency coordinated effort
-  Familiarity with common emergency response organizational structures is necessary and expected



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3

## Purpose of On-Scene Management

- 🛑 Maintain physical safety of disaster workers
- 🛑 Maintain mental well being of disaster workers
- 🛑 Provide clear leadership and organizational structure
- 🛑 Improve effectiveness of rescue efforts



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4

## Objectives of CERT Organization

- 🛑 Identify the scope of the incident
  - *What is the problem?*
- 🛑 Determine an overall strategy
  - *What can CERT do, and will they do it?*
- 🛑 Deploy resources
  - *Who is going to do what?*
- 🛑 Document actions and results
  - *If you didn't write it down, it didn't happen!*



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5

## Incident Command System

 ICS provides:


- Well-defined management structure
- Manageable span of control
- Common terminology
- Effective communication
- Consolidated action plans
- Comprehensive resource management
- Accountability




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6

## Incident Command System

 Key Concepts

- Unity of Command – each CERT reports to only one person
- Common terminology and organizational structure
- Manageable Span of Control


 Provides flexibility of resource management

- Positions filled as needed
- Modular units

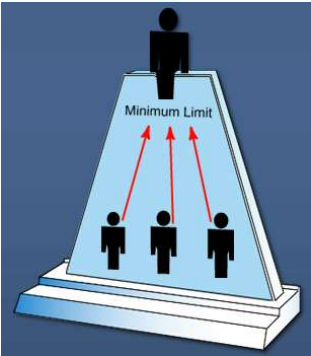
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7

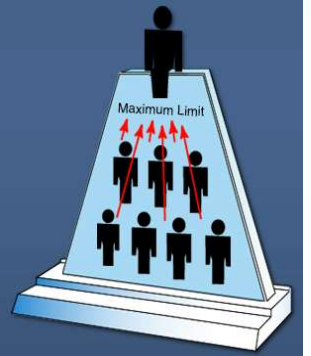
### ICS Management

 **Span of Control**

- Is between 3 and 7 team members
- Optimally does not exceed 5 team members



Minimum Limit




Maximum Limit

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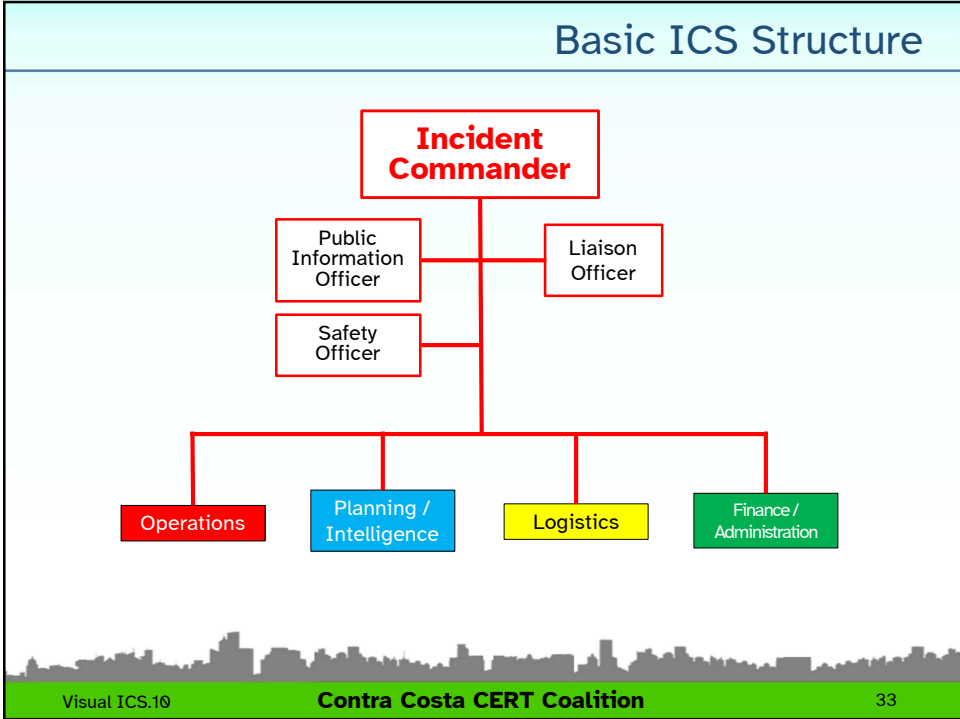
### Incident Command System

 **The five major functional areas of ICS**

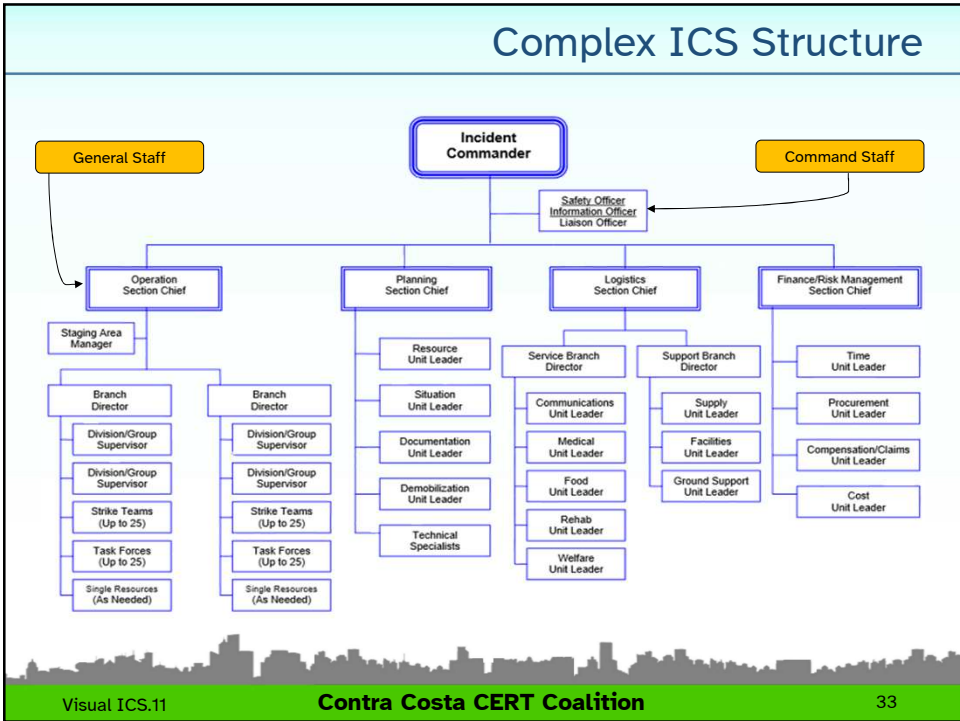
- **Command**
- **Operations**
- **Planning / Intelligence**
- **Logistics**
- **Finance / Administration**

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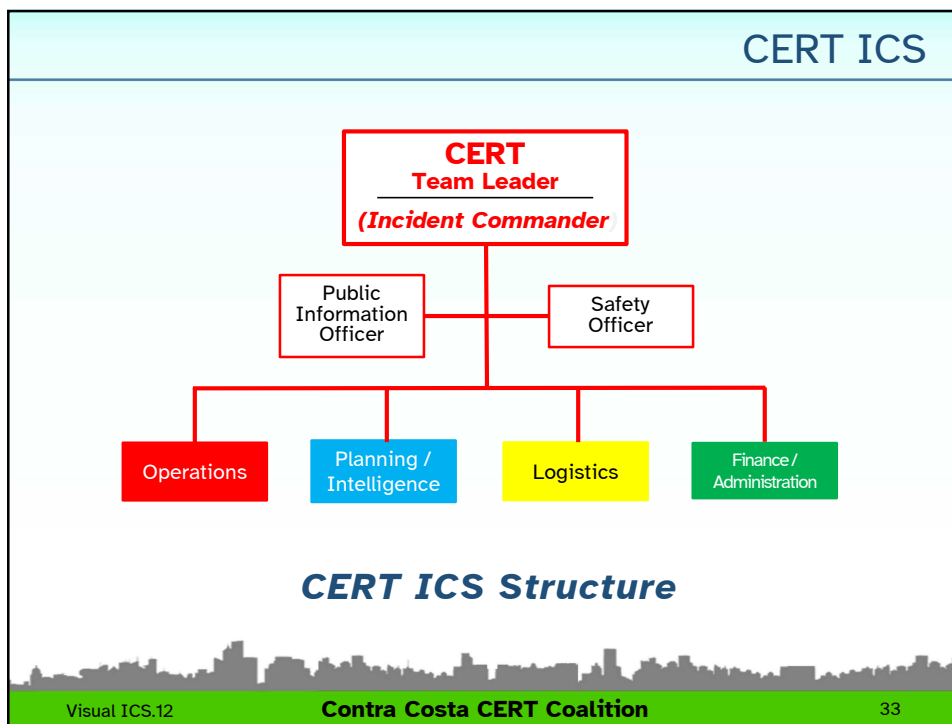
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12



13

### CERT Leader

- 👤 Normally assumed by the first person on scene
- 👤 Incident command post (ICP) location may be pre-established or it may be created by the CERT Leader
- 👤 Leadership position may be transferred when a more qualified person arrives
- 👤 CERT Leader may appoint CERT members to positions in Operations, Plans, Logistics, Administration, Safety Officer, etc. as incident expands




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14

### CERT Leader Duties

- 👤 Is Incident Commander unless part of a larger ICS structure
- 👤 Has overall responsibility for all CERT actions
- 👤 Sets objectives and priorities
- 👤 Assigns personnel as needed
- 👤 Ensures coordination of staff actions and activities
- 👤 Communicates with higher authorities (police, fire, EMS, EOC, etc.)



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15

### CERT Safety Officer





-  Reports to the CERT Leader
-  Assesses and anticipates hazardous and unsafe situations
-  Develops and recommends measures for assuring personnel health and safety
-  May develop a Site Safety Plan
-  Reviews the Incident Action Plan for safety implications
-  **Can halt any operation at any time for safety concerns**




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16

### Public Information Officer





-  Reports to the CERT Leader
-  Acts as the spokesperson for CERT under the direction of the CERT Leader
-  Assesses situation and prepares documents for release to the press and public that present a timely, accurate, consistent picture of the event
-  Reviews public social media accounts of the incident to correct any misinformation



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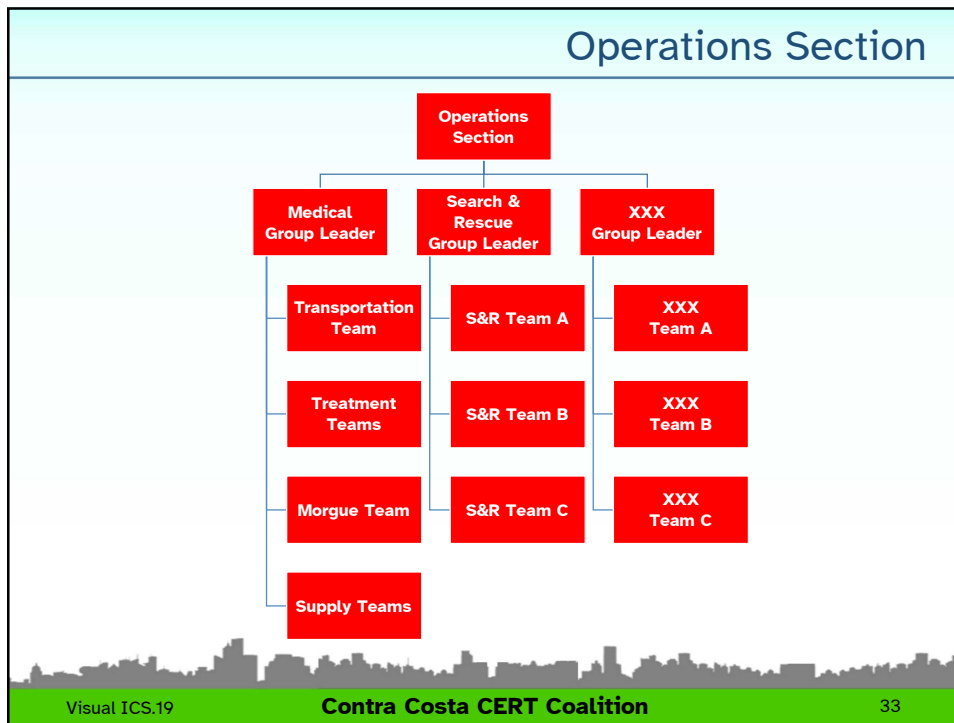
17

### Operations Section

-  Develops the operations tactics
-  Develops the Operations Section organizational structure
-  Conducts tactical operations to carry out the plan
-  Directs all operational resources deployed

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18



19

## Planning / Intelligence Section

### Planning

- Develops the **Incident Action Plan** to accomplish the objectives defined for the event
- Maintains resource status on all deployed personnel and equipment during the event
- Maintains active incident documentation
- May utilize Advance Planning to anticipate future needs

### Intelligence

- Collects and evaluates information
- Validates information into intelligence

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20

## Logistics Section

### Provides resources and all other services needed to support an incident:

- Personnel
- Food
- Communications
- Facilities
- Transportation
- etc.



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21

## Finance / Administration Section

- 👤 Responsible for documenting costs related to incident
- 👤 Provides accounting, procurement, time recording and cost analysis
- 👤 Volunteer time is used for Federal matching dollars, and tracking is very important
  - The value in California was **\$38.61** per hour in 2023
- 👤 Retains Documentation at end of event

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22

## Dealing with the Media

- 👤 You may get questions from the public or from media representatives
- 👤 Refer inquiries to CERT Team Leader, Incident Commander, or **Public Information Officer**
- 👤 Do not let media interfere with CERT activities
- 👤 **Do not** divulge any sensitive information






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23

## National Incident Management System

-  NIMS provides ability to work together
-  IS-100: Introduction to ICS  
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.c>
-  IS-700: Introduction to NIMS  
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-700.b>



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24

## CERT Mobilization

-  CERTs take care of themselves, their family, their home, and their neighbors
-  Depending on local CERT protocols, CERT members may respond to pre-designated locations, ready for response
-  CERT organization should have effective communications, a manageable span of control and maintain accountability

*The greatest good for the greatest number  
 without placing CERT members in harms way*

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25

## CERT Mobilization

- 👤 CERT Leader will develop an organization plan
- 👤 Priorities may change as operation continues; CERT Leader needs to stay on top of these shifting priorities
- 👤 Communications must be organized, efficient and effective
- 👤 ICS was developed to assist in the management of major incidents – Use it
- 👤 Goal is always to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people while maintaining CERT safety

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26

## Documentation

- 👤 Each level of authority is responsible for documentation (CERT Leader, Ops, Plans, Logs, Admin)





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27

## Documentation

-  CERT Teams provide the Command Post with ongoing information and documentation on:
  - Damage assessment
  - Team status
  - Ongoing needs
-  Command Post documents:
  - Incident status
  - Incident locations: access routes and identified hazards
  - Support locations: Staging areas, treatment/triage areas and morgue



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28

## CERT Forms

-  Vary by local CERT protocols
  - Damage Assessment
  - Personnel Resources Sign-in (ICS-211)
  - Incident/Assignment Tracking Log (ICS-204)
  - Briefing/Assignment (ICS-201/203)
  - Victim Treatment Area Record
  - Activity Log (ICS-214)
  - Equipment Inventory (ICS-209/210)
  - General Message (ICS-213)

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29

### In the End, Calm Heads Prevail



Crowds panic as flooding threatens Ireland...

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30

### Questions?






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31

## Takeaways

-  CERTs operate using ICS
-  ICS, the Incident Command System:
  - Flexible and Scalable
  - Span of Control
  - Modular Command Structure
  - Common Terminology
-  Document, Document, Document

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