



OKLAHOMA CITY NATIONAL MEMORIAL & MUSEUM

DISCOVER EXPERIENCE LEARN

LESSONS FROM THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING

PROVIDED IN COOPERATION WITH THE OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COMMUNITY RESPONSE: CRISIS MANAGEMENT

GRADE LEVEL

High School

TIME REQUIRED

1 class period

SUBJECTS

Oklahoma History

United States History

MATERIALS

- [Community Response: Crisis Management Videos](#)
- Incident Command System Organizational Chart

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

Within minutes of the Oklahoma City bombing, first responders arrived to assess the situation, which, for the first time in the history of our nation, included both a federal disaster declaration and a crime scene. Much of the credit for Oklahoma City's successful response and recovery effort resulted from the city's training in the Incident Command System (ICS). In July 1994, key personnel from all city departments, volunteer agencies, and utility companies from Oklahoma City attended a course at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The course was designed to teach how to handle large-scale disasters incorporating the ICS. Since all the city agencies had been trained in the ICS, responses in the initial hours after the bombing were much more efficient, which aided in the rescue and recovery process.

The ICS was first established by fire departments in the 1970s after a devastating wildfire in California claimed 16 lives, destroyed 700 structures and burned over one-half million acres over a period of 13 days in 1970. Problems with communication and coordination played a large role in the effectiveness of the response. To avoid future tragedies due to ineffective communications, Congress mandated that the U.S. Forest Service design a system that allowed for improved communication and coordination between agencies. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara County Fire Departments and the Los Angeles City Fire Department partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to develop Firefighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies or FIRESCOPE.



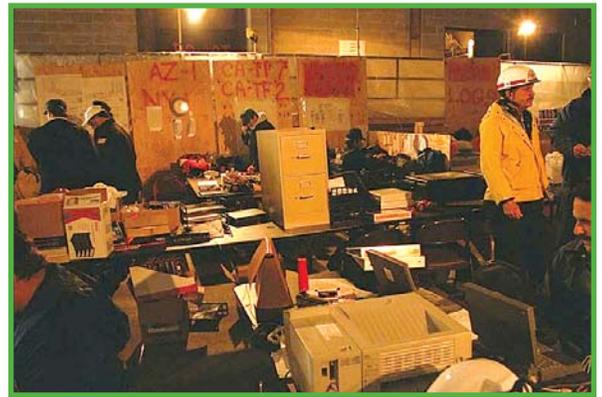
Out of FIRESCOPE came the ICS, a command and control system that utilizes an Incident Commander who takes the lead in gathering and disseminating information to and from supervisors from other agencies and organizations, who in turn communicate with their personnel. This helped eliminate disorganization and chaos during fires. As time went on, other agencies found the ICS to be useful in disasters other than wildfires and adopted the system.

In March 2004, Homeland Security released the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS had been developed at the request of President

George Bush in February 2003, to ensure that all domestic incidents would be responded to both efficiently and effectively. ICS is now known as NIMS and in order to receive any federal preparedness funding state and local agencies must adopt NIMS.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003, and is responsible in providing support for our citizens and first responders in times of disasters. It is also the agency responsible for training federal, state, and local agencies in NIMS.

FEMA arrived in Oklahoma City within four hours of the incident. They also sent 11 Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) teams to the scene. The teams came from Phoenix, AZ; Sacramento, CA; New York City, NY; Montgomery County, Maryland; Virginia Beach, VA; Los Angeles, CA; Fairfax County, VA; Dade County, FL; Puget Sound, WA; Menlo Park, CA; Orange County, CA. At the time there were no US&R teams stationed in Oklahoma, but there are now two units, one located in Tulsa and one in Oklahoma City.



SOURCES Federal Emergency Management Agency. <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>

The City of Oklahoma City. Document Management Team. *Final Report Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building Bombing, April 19, 1995*. Stillwater: Fire Protection Publications, 1996.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand how vital communication and team work are in the time of a crisis.
- Students will understand the importance of training and preparedness.
- Students will understand how federal, state, and local agencies work together in response to disasters using ICS and NIMS.

PROCEDURE

- Discuss why it is imperative to have good communication and coordination between local, state, and federal agencies during a crisis.
- Show Crisis Management videos featuring former FEMA Director James Lee Witt, Former Governor and First Lady Frank and Cathy Keating, Retired Fire Chief Gary Marrs, and other city leaders and discuss how the ICS was implemented after the Oklahoma City bombing.
- Share the command structure during the rescue and recovery effort after the bombing using the Incident Command System Organizational Chart.
- Discuss what other disasters would necessitate implementing NIMS.

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT/ACTIVITIES

- Write about a time when communication and team work helped in a crisis situation in which you were involved.
- Interview a local firefighter or US&R team about using the Incident Command System and its effectiveness.
- Research the crisis management policy for your school and compare its structure with the Incident Command System.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For further information on disaster response, the Incident Command System and the National Incident Command System, please visit the following sites:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

<http://www.fema.gov/>

Emergency Management Institute (EMI)

<http://training.fema.gov/>

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

<http://www.dhs.gov/index.shtm>

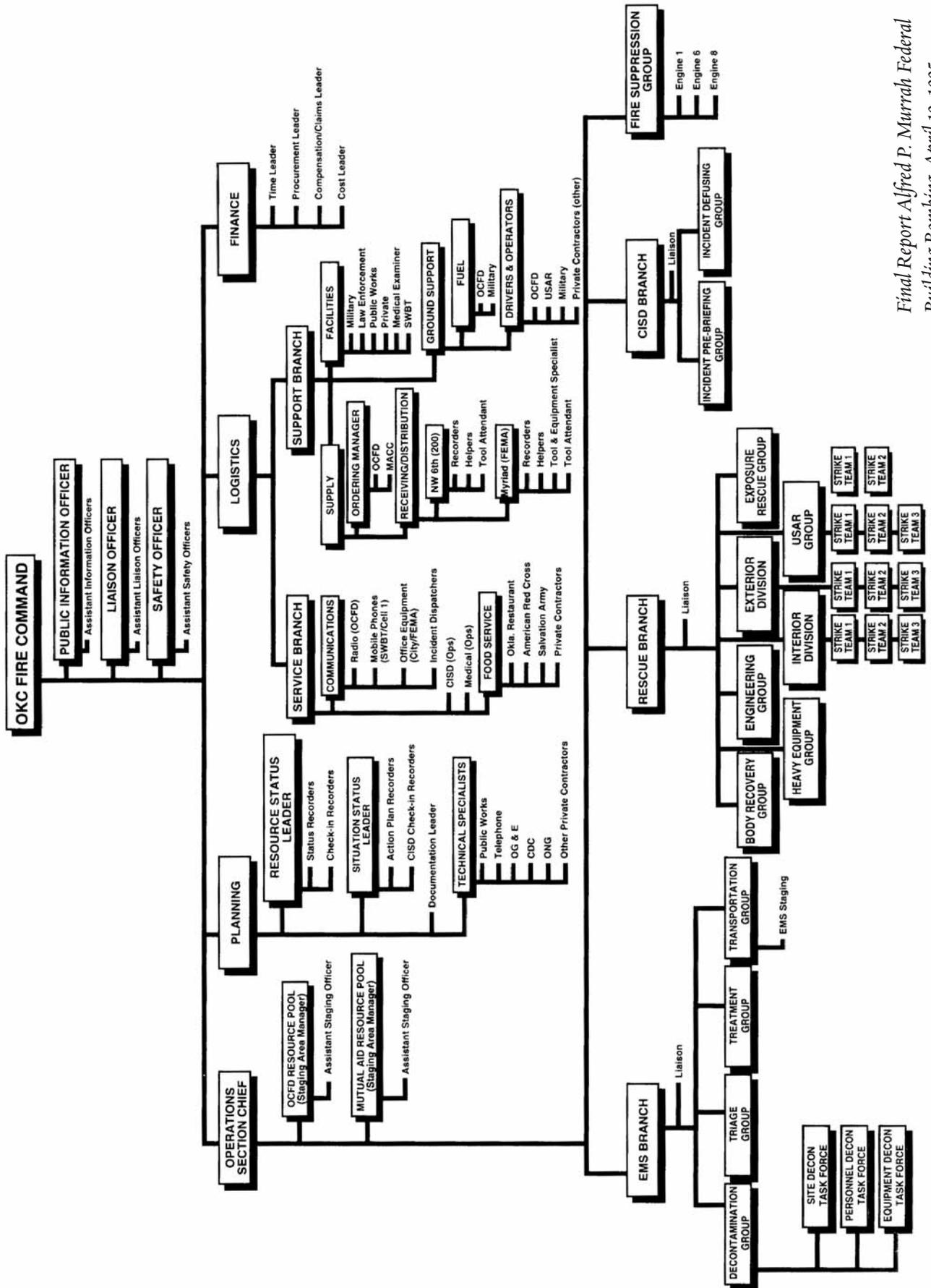
Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security (OKOHS)

<http://www.ok.gov/homeland/>

Urban Search and Rescue (US&R)

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/usr/>

Figure One: Incident Command System Organizational Chart



Final Report Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building Bombing, April 19, 1995.