



Section II. Establishing a Joint Information Center

2.1 WHAT IT IS

The Joint Information System (JIS) provides the mechanism to organize, integrate and coordinate information to ensure timely, accurate, accessible and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines.

The JIC is the central location that facilitates the operation of the JIS. It is a physical or an Internet-based virtual location where personnel with public information responsibilities perform media and community relations during an incident or event. The JIC structure is designed to work equally well for large or small incidents and can expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident.

Efficient information flow is critical to effectively meet public information needs and carry out PIO responsibilities when multiple organizations come together to respond to an emergency or manage an event.

By maintaining a centralized communication facility, resources can be better managed and duplication of effort is minimized. The use of a JIC allows for tracking and maintaining records and information.

2.2 JIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be the first and best source of information.
- Develop, recommend and execute public information plans and strategies on behalf of the IC/UC.
- Advise the IC/UC concerning public affairs issues that could impact the response.
- Ensure the various response agencies' information personnel work together to minimize conflict.
- Gain and maintain public trust and confidence.
- Gather information about the crisis.
- Capture video and photos of the crisis for release to the media and to support the response.
- Write and communicate emergency public information regarding public protective actions, evacuations, sheltering and other public safety messages.
- Ensure the timely and coordinated release of accurate information to the public by providing a single release point of information.
- Facilitate and manage control of rumors.
- Monitor and measure public perception of the incident.
- Inform the IC/UC of public reaction, attitude and needs.

2.3 WHEN IT SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED

The JIC structure is most useful when multiple organizations must coordinate timely, accurate information to the public and other stakeholders. Emergency situations could include natural disasters, oil spills and other hazardous substance releases or terrorist incidents. The JIC structure may also be useful in coordinating multi-agency event planning for major meetings and events, such as the Olympics, Super Bowl.

The following are incident types in which multiple agencies are involved and for which the IC/UC would usually decide to establish a JIC.¹

Type 4

- Command staff and general staff functions are activated only if needed.
- Several resources are required to mitigate the incident.
- The incident is usually limited to one operational period in the control phase.
- No written IAP is required, but a documented operational briefing will be completed for all incoming resources.
- Examples include house fires, minor oil spills and minor chemical releases.

Type 3

- When capabilities exceed initial needs, the appropriate ICS positions should be added to match the complexity of the incident.
- Some or all of the Command and General Staff positions may be activated, as well as Division/Group Supervisor and/or Unit Leader level positions.
- The incident may extend into multiple operational periods.
- A written IAP may be required for each operational period.
- Examples include the Texas City Refinery explosion and fire, Graniteville, SC train derailment, medium oil spill or chemical release and local flooding.

Type 2

- This type of incident extends beyond the capabilities of local control and is expected to go into multiple operational periods. A Type 2 incident may require the response of resources out of the area, including regional and/or national resources, to effectively manage the operations, command and general staffing.
- Most or all of the Command and General Staff positions are filled.
- A written IAP is required for each operational period.
- Many of the functional units are needed and staffed.
- Examples include National Special Security Events (NSSE), such as pre-deployments for the Olympics or Super Bowl, national political conventions, major flooding and major wildfires.

¹ Source: U.S. Fire Administration. <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/assets/IncidentTypes.pdf>

Type 1

- This type of incident is the most complex, requiring national resources to safely and effectively manage and operate.
- All Command and General Staff positions are activated.
- Branches need to be established.
- Use of resource advisors at the incident base is recommended.
- There is a high impact on the local jurisdiction requiring additional staff for office administrative and support functions.
- Examples include the Deepwater Horizon Event, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Hurricane Katrina, and national pandemic influenza.

2.4 FLEXIBLE, FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

The JIC structure is designed to accommodate the diverse range of responses likely to be performed by NRT member agencies, ranging from a large multiple-agency, all-hazards response to a small single-agency, single-hazard response. The structure can grow or shrink depending on the unique requirements of a specific response and should be customized for each response. This adaptability encompasses staffing, organizational structure, facilities, hours of operation, resource and logistical requirements, and products and services. If a virtual JIC is established, JIC staff members can perform their assigned functions from work, home or any location with Internet access.

The JIC organizational structure is based on functions that must be performed whether a person is handling a routine emergency, or managing communications for a major response to a disaster. The following are options for organizing a JIC.

FIGURE 2 – INITIAL PIO

The organizational chart below represents the jobs being accomplished by the initial PIO and assistants, if any, before the JIC is formed.

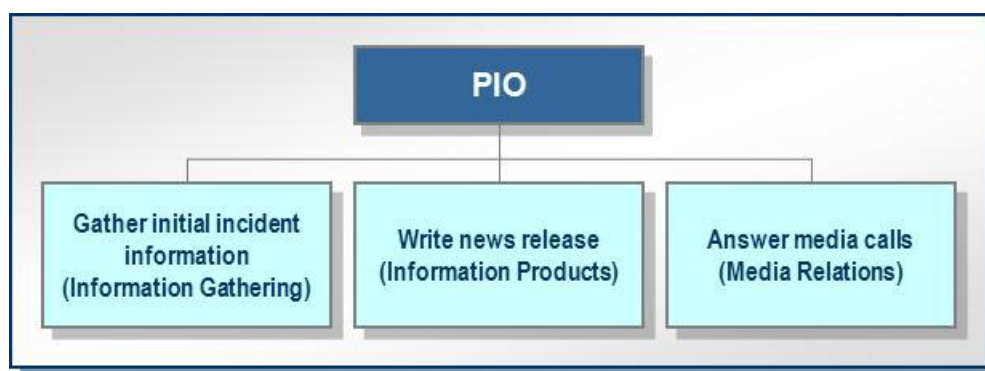


FIGURE 3 – JIC (TYPE 4)

The organizational chart below is an example of how the initial JIC structure may look during a Type 4 incident. A box represents a person assigned to the JIC. The functions performed by personnel in these positions are listed below each box.

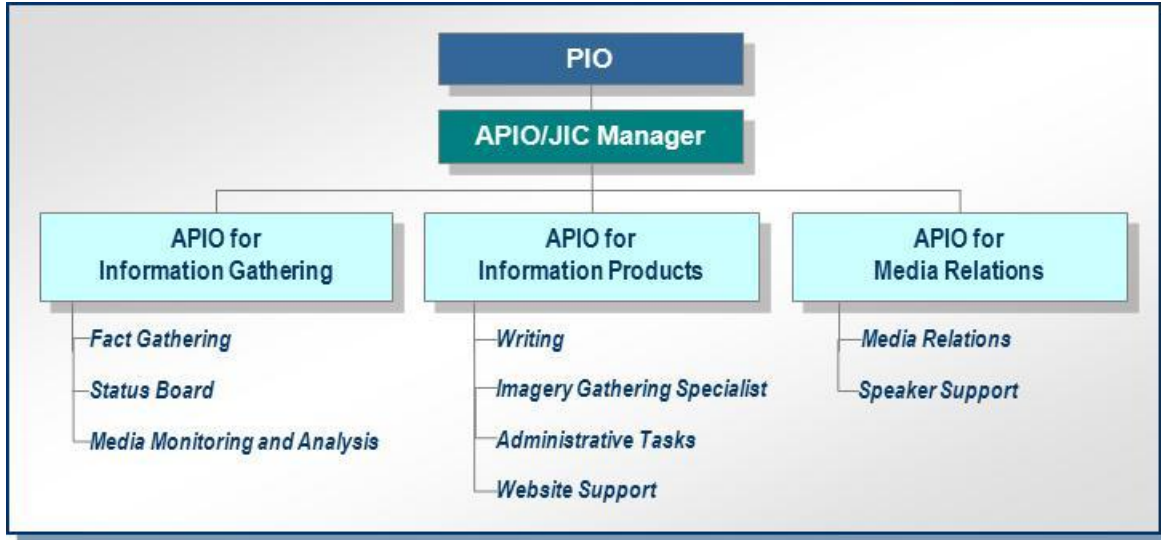


FIGURE 4 – JIC (TYPE 3)

The organizational chart below is an example of how the JIC structure may look during a Type 3 incident. Response positions below the APIO level may be staffed by more than one person, based on the needs of the incident. Functions not specifically assigned would be performed by the appropriate APIO.



FIGURE 5 – JIC (TYPE 3 OR TYPE 2)

The organizational chart below is an example of how the JIC structure may look during a Type 3 or Type 2 incident with major community relations issues. Response positions below the APIO level may be staffed by more than one person, based on the needs of the incident. Functions not specifically assigned would be performed by the appropriate APIO.

**FIGURE 6 – JIC (TYPE 3, TYPE 2, OR TYPE 1)**

The organizational chart below is an example of how your JIC structure may look during a Type 3, Type 2 or Type 1 incident with major community relations issues and a need for constant JIC representation in the field. Response positions below the APIO level may be staffed by more than one person, based on the needs of the incident. Functions not specifically assigned would be performed by the appropriate APIO.

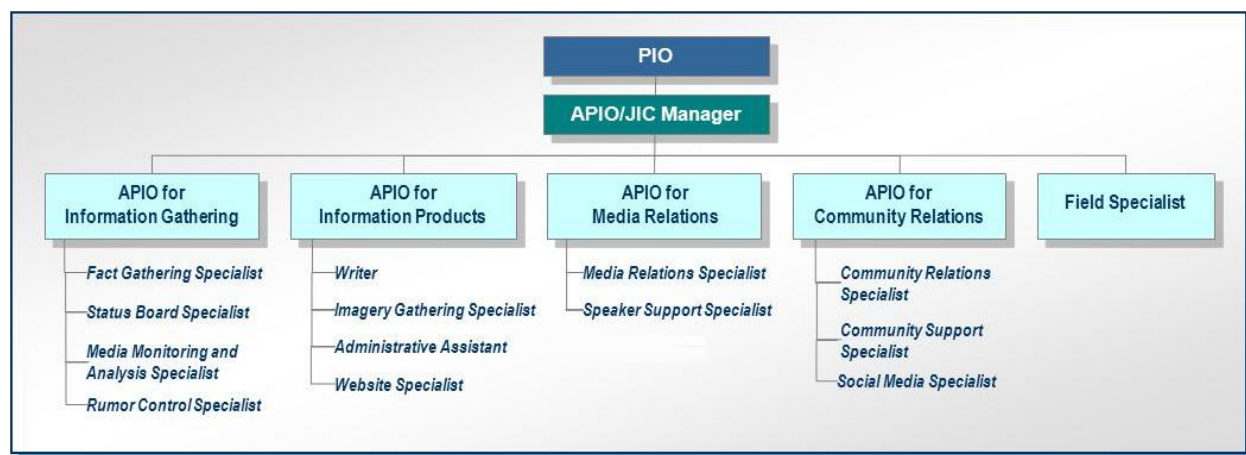
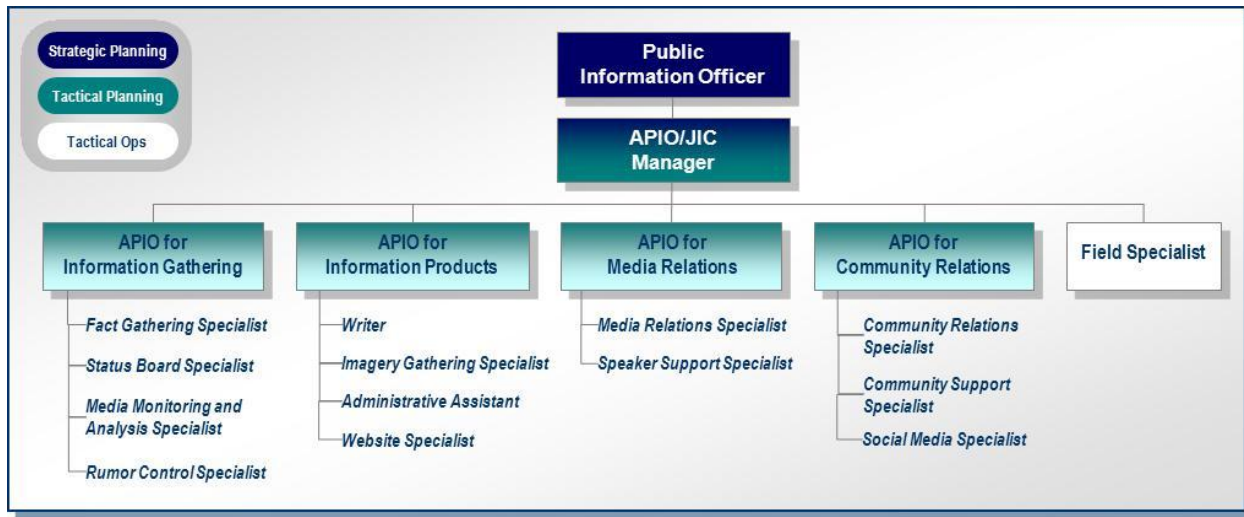


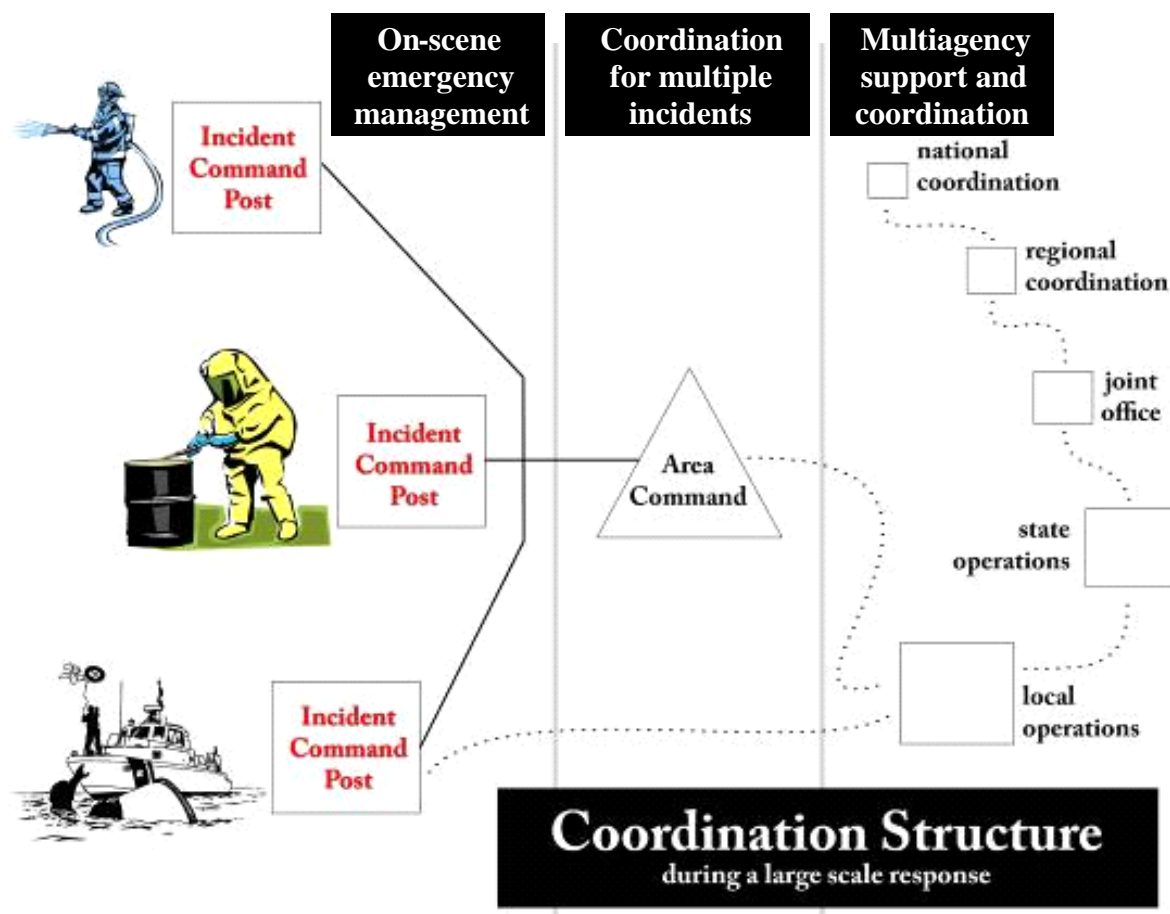
FIGURE 7 – JIC

The organizational chart below illustrates how JIC management and leadership activities divide among the three leadership levels of PIO, APIO/JIC Manager and APIOs below the JIC Manager for, or with, APIO for Information Gathering, APIO for Information Products, APIO for Media Relations and APIO for Community Relations. The PIO has certain responsibilities dictated by NIMS ICS and in reality spends most of his or her time outside the JIC working on strategic goals with the IC/UC and other Command and General staff. The JIC Manager works with the PIO on strategic plans, takes on the PIO's responsibilities in his or her absence and acts as an office manager, primarily directing the APIOs. The APIOs are the top-level "specialists", and work with the JIC Manager to develop tactical public information activities in support of the IC/UC's strategic plans. Activities below the APIO level are more specialized (in a full JIC) comprising "boots on the ground" work implementing tactical operations.



2.5 COORDINATION

FIGURE 8 – COORDINATION STRUCTURE DURING A LARGE SCALE RESPONSE



During a national incident of significance, a coordinated response from all levels of the national response community occurs. The figure above illustrates the command and coordination structure that could be put in place during such an incident. ICP PIOs and JICs are located where tactical operations are managed directly. Multiple ICPs may be established due to geographic concerns, such as during widespread wildland fires, or for specific mission assignments, such as one ICP solely responsible for oil spill response or other missions. At the national level, ESF #15 of the NRF is activated when the Department of Homeland Security determines an incident is complex enough to require a coordinated interagency communication effort and is intended to support existing response communication efforts. Coordination between the NRT JIC and ESF #15 is described in more detail in *Appendix A: NRT JIC and ESF #15 operations during a Federal response*.

2.6 ESTABLISHING THE INITIAL RESPONSE

Immediately after an incident occurs, there is a high demand for information. The media, public and responders require accurate and timely information for all incidents—large or small, a natural disaster or accident. The PIO is responsible for the dissemination of updated information during a response/incident.