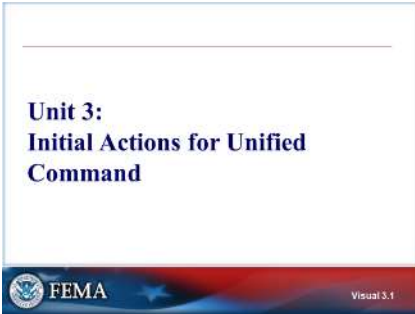

Unit 3: Initial Actions for Unified Command

STUDENT MANUAL

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Visual 3.1

UNIT 3: INITIAL ACTIONS FOR UNIFIED COMMAND

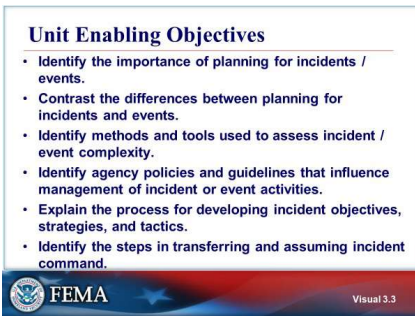
Unit 3 covers the steps in the Planning “P” that focus on the Incident Commander/Unified Command developing and updating incident objectives as well as establishing strategies at the Command and General Staff meeting.



Visual 3.2

UNIT TERMINAL OBJECTIVE

Develop incident objectives for a simulated incident.



Visual 3.3

UNIT ENABLING OBJECTIVES

- Identify the importance of planning for incidents/events.
- Contrast the differences between planning for incidents and events.
- Identify methods and tools used to assess incident/event complexity.
- Identify agency policies and guidelines that influence management of incident or event activities.
- Explain the process for developing incident objectives, strategies, and tactics.
- Identify the steps in transferring and assuming incident command.

The Final Exam is based on the Unit Enabling Objectives

Planning “P” and Unified Command

This unit covers:

- IC/UC objectives meeting.
- Command and General Staff meeting
- Agency Administrator Briefing

FEMA Visual 3.4

Visual 3.4

Incidents vs. Events

- Incident: An unexpected occurrence that requires immediate response actions through an ICS organization.
- Event: A scheduled non-emergency activity (sporting events, concerts, parades, and other events requiring special security).

FEMA Visual 3.5

Visual 3.5

Planning for Complex Incidents

- Time is of the essence (time criticality)
- The situation is unstable
- The incident has the potential to expand rapidly
- Communications and information may be incomplete
- Staff on scene may be experienced in control measures, but are not necessarily experienced in managing expanding incidents

FEMA Visual 3.6

Visual 3.6

PLANNING “P” AND UNIFIED COMMAND

This unit covers the steps in the Operational Period Planning Cycle (Planning “P”) that focus on the Incident Commander/Unified Command developing and updating incident objectives, establishing strategies at the Command and General Staff meeting, as well as conducting the Agency Administrator Briefing.

INCIDENTS VS. EVENTS

Incident: An occurrence, natural or human-caused, that requires an ICS response to protect life or property. Incidents can, for example, include major disasters, emergencies, terrorist attacks, terrorist threats, civil unrest, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, tsunamis, war-related disasters, public health and medical emergencies, and other occurrences requiring an emergency response.

Event: A scheduled, normally preplanned activity (e.g., sporting events, concerts, parades, and other events requiring special security).

PLANNING FOR COMPLEX INCIDENTS

This kind of situation requires immediate organizing actions that must be taken to ensure effective incident management and control. The number of considerations will increase as the situation deteriorates and the incident grows.

The first responding units to the incident must take the initial steps to provide organization for the incident. These initial decisions are important and will impact the long term management of the incident.



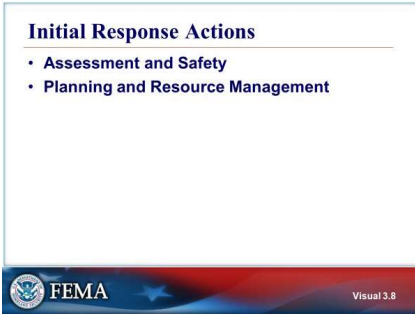
Visual 3.7

PLANNING FOR EVENTS

Event planners should know the following:

- Type of event
- Location, size, expected duration, history, and potential in order to project incident objectives
- Number of agencies involved
- Single or multijurisdictional
- Command Staff needs (public information, safety, and liaison)
- Kind, type, and number of resources required
- Projected aviation operations
- Staging Areas required
- Other facilities required
- Kind and type of logistical support needs (e.g., communications, food, medical)
- Financial considerations
- Known limitations or restrictions
- Available communications

Use the ICS incident action planning process to plan for scheduled events as well as emergencies/incidents. In doing so, it reinforces ICS concepts and makes implementation during emergencies much easier.



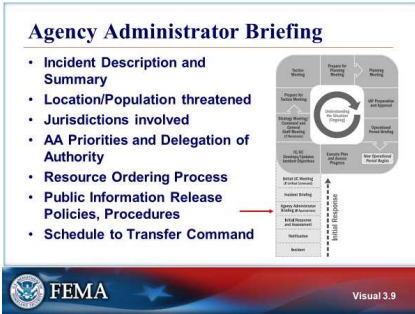
Visual 3.8

INITIAL RESPONSE ACTIONS

For a Unified Command in a complex incident, these are actions that will normally precede the establishment of the unified command and the agency Administrator briefing.

- Assessment and Safety
 - Sizeup the situation.
 - Determine if life is at immediate risk.
 - Ensure that personnel safety factors are taken into account.
 - Determine if there are any environmental issues that need to be addressed.
- Planning and Resource Management
 - Assume command and establish the Incident Command Post.
 - Establish immediate incident objectives, strategies, and tactics..
 - Determine if there are enough resources of the right kind and type on scene or ordered. The incident objectives will drive resource requirements.
 - Establish the initial organization that maintains span of control.

Requesting an Incident Management Team (IMT) may be necessary depending on the size or complexity of the incident, or existing policies and laws.



Visual 3.9

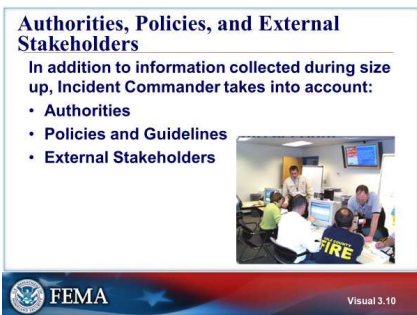
AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR (AA) BRIEFING

The Agency Administrator's (AA) Briefing is used to convey critical information that the incoming Incident Commander (IC) needs to safely and efficiently assume command of the incident and achieve the management goals and objectives of the Agency Administrator(s).

This meeting is only necessary when the IC assumes incident management duties outside their normal position description or are from a jurisdiction that does not possess authority to manage the incident they are being assigned.

In those cases the incoming IC must be delegated that authority from an official responsible for administering policy for the agency, jurisdiction.

During the briefing, the agency administrator or a designee provides information, guidance, and direction—including priorities and constraints—necessary for the successful management of the incident. The briefing is intended to ensure a common understanding between the jurisdiction, agency, or organization and the incident personnel regarding such things as the environmental, social, political, economic, and cultural issues relevant to the incident and its location.



Visual 3.10

AUTHORITIES, POLICIES, AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The Incident Commander must also be aware of authorities, policies, and external stakeholders as part of the incident size up.

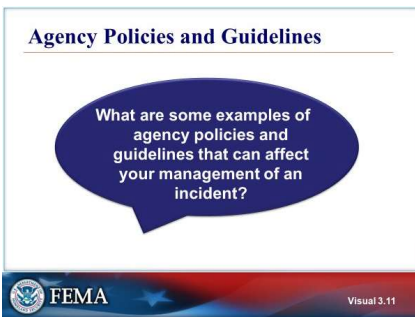
Agency policy can affect the incident objectives. All agencies develop policies and guidelines for accomplishing their responsibilities. The Incident Commander must be fully aware of agency policy including any limits of authority.

On the majority of incidents, agency policy is known by the Incident Commander because the incident occurs in his/her jurisdiction. These guidelines and policies may be for routine activities or for emergency activities, or both. These policies and guidelines may come to bear in the management of an incident or a planned event based upon the jurisdiction of an agency. For larger incidents, some agencies will require agency policies in writing.

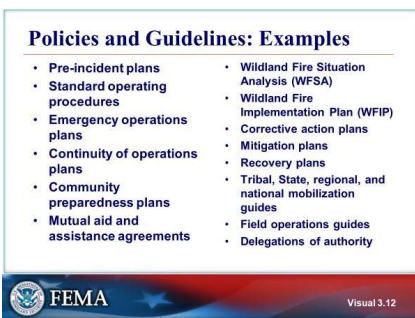
These policies, guidelines, and authorities may give direction on the following:

- Safety
- Control objectives
- Cleanup and rehabilitation guidelines
- Spending
- Resource sharing

External stakeholders are those parties not directly affected by the incident who, nonetheless, could be affected by decisions that are made in conjunction with the incident. External stakeholders can usually be identified when the question is asked, "Who else could be affected by this decision?"



Visual 3.11



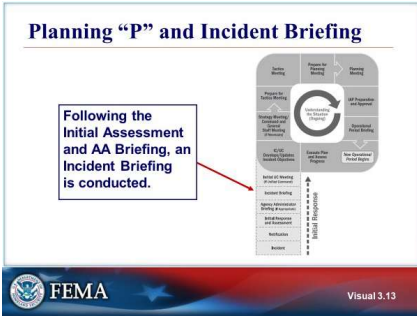
Visual 3.12

AGENCY POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

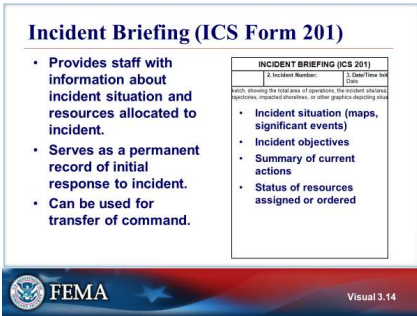
POLICIES AND GUIDELINES: EXAMPLES

The following are examples of agency policies and guidelines that can affect management of an incident:

- Pre-incident plans
- Standard operating procedures
- Emergency operations plans
- Continuity of operations plans
- Community preparedness plans
- Mutual aid and assistance agreements
- Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA)
- Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP)
- Corrective action plans
- Mitigation plans
- Recovery plans
- Tribal, State, regional, and national mobilization guides
- Field operations guides
- Delegations of authority



Visual 3.13



Visual 3.14

PLANNING “P” AND INCIDENT BRIEFING

The Planning “P” illustrates the incident planning cycle. Following the initial response and assessment, and the agency administrator briefing, an incident briefing is conducted using ICS Form 201, the Incident Briefing form.

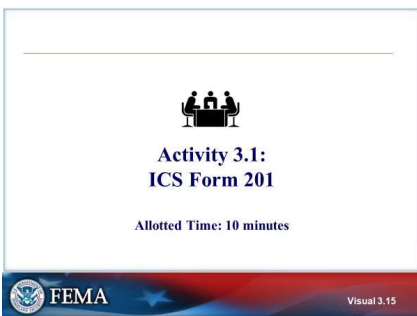
INCIDENT BRIEFING (ICS FORM 201)

The ICS Form 201 Incident Briefing form:

- Provides staff with information about the incident situation (to include complexity) and the resources allocated to the incident. This should include objectives, tactics, organization, facilities, communications and notifications completed.
- Serves as a permanent record of the initial response to the incident.
- Can be used for transfer of command.

As the visual shows, the ICS Form 201 is used to communicate the incident situation (maps), objectives, current actions, and resource status.

Refer to Handout 3-1: ICS Form 201.




Visual 3.15

ACTIVITY 3.1: ICS FORM 201


The instructor will explain Activity 3.1.

You will have 10 minutes to complete Activity 3.1.

Transfer of Command



Process of moving responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander/Unified Command to another.




Visual 3.16

TRANSFER OF COMMAND

Transfer of command is the process of moving the responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander/Unified Command to another. It can be incident command to unified command or unified command to unified command.

Steps in Transfer of Command

Incoming IC (Assuming)	Outgoing IC (Transferring)
Assess situation with current IC.	Assess situation with incoming IC.
Receive briefing (ICS 201).	Deliver briefing (ICS 201).
Determine appropriate time for transfer of command.	Determine appropriate time for transfer of command.
Notify others of change in command.	Notify others of change in command.
Reassign or demobilize current IC.	Accept new assignment or demobilize.



Visual 3.17

STEPS IN TRANSFER OF COMMAND

Incoming Incident Commander (Assuming)

1. Assess situation with current IC.
2. Receive briefing, using the ICS Form 201.
3. Determine appropriate time for transfer of command.
4. Notify others of change in command.
5. Reassign or demobilize current IC.

Outgoing Incident Commander (Transferring)

1. Assess situation with incoming IC.
2. Deliver briefing from the ICS Form 201.
3. Determine appropriate time for transfer of command.
4. Notify others of change in command.
5. Accept new assignment or demobilize.



Visual 3.18



Visual 3.19

TRANSFER OF COMMAND BRIEFING

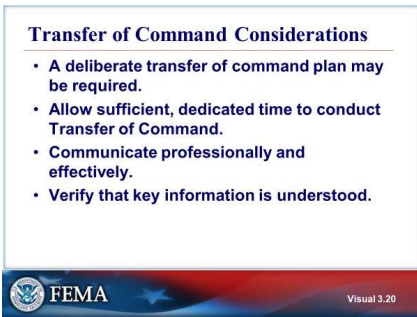
The briefing of the receiving Incident Commander will contain the following information that will be recorded on the ICS Form 201:

- Current situation to include objectives, tactics and organization.
- Resources available and status to include facilities, communications, and notifications completed.
- Particular areas of concern (political, community interest, etc.). Include a discussion of complexities associated with the incident.
- Logistical Support needed or retained.
- Turnover of appropriate incident documentation
- Future outlook

TRANSFER OF COMMAND PITFALLS

Pitfalls often associated with transfer of command:

- Compromised responder safety.
- Inefficient use of resources.
- Ineffective Transfer of Information – key information needed to manage the incident is not transferred to the incoming command.
- Attitudes:
 - Egos – positional or personality conflicts that interfere with transfer of command.
 - Complacency – lack of proactive approach to get ahead of the expanding incident.
 - Resignation – giving up.



Visual 3.20

TRANSFER OF COMMAND CONSIDERATIONS

To mitigate the potential pitfalls, consider these suggestions:

- A written plan outlining the tasks associated with the command transfer can be an effective method to ensure key information is transferred.
- Allow sufficient dedicated time for the transfer of command. This may require stepping away from hands on management of the incident in order to effectively complete the transfer of command.
- Engage in active listening skills and positive communications.
- It is critical to verify that key information is transferred to the incoming Unified Command.



Visual 3.21

INITIAL UNIFIED COMMAND MEETING

An important aspect of planning under Unified Command is the need for all jurisdictional or functional agency members of the Unified Command to participate in a command meeting early in the incident response.

The command meeting provides the responsible agency officials with an opportunity to discuss and concur on important issues prior to joint incident planning.

Requirements for the Initial Unified Command meeting include:

- Prior to the meeting, the members of the Unified Command should have reviewed the purposes and agenda items and be prepared to discuss them.
- The command meeting should only include the members of the Unified Command. Select staff may be required to brief key information to the Unified Command for this meeting.
- The meeting should be brief, and important points, to include Unified Command decisions should be documented.
- The results of this meeting will guide the overall response effort.

Refer to Handout 3-2: Sample Initial Unified Command Meeting Agenda.



Visual 3.22

WHAT'S AN OPERATIONAL PERIOD?

The NIMS definition of an operational period is the time scheduled for executing a given set of operation actions, as specified in the incident action plan.

All ICS incident action planning is designed around identifying accomplishments expected over a set period of time called the Operational Period.

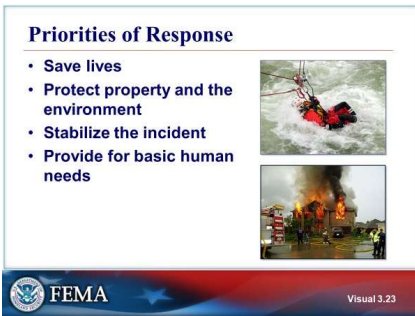
The specific length of time of the Operational Period varies based on a list of factors:

- Safety conditions – Safety of responders, victims, and others is always the first priority on any response.
- Condition of resources – Planning must be done far enough in advance to ensure that additional resources needed for the next Operational Period are available.
- The length of time necessary or available to achieve the tactical assignments.
- Availability of fresh resources.
- Future involvement of additional jurisdictions or agencies.
- Environmental conditions – Factors such as the amount of daylight remaining and weather and wind conditions can affect decisions about the length of the Operational Period.

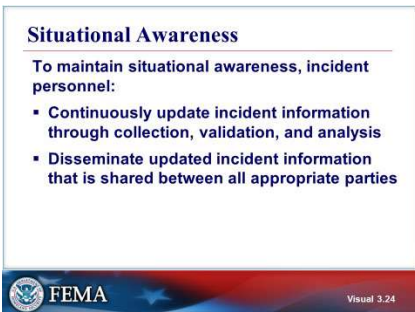
The Incident Commander will determine the length of the Operational Period with input from staff. In some cases, the Operational Period length may change from day to day based on operational and incident needs.

The length of an Operational Period depends on the nature and complexity of the incident. Common lengths of Operational Periods are:

- 4, 8, 12, or 24 hours depending on the nature and complexity of the incident and the working conditions such as weather, safety, and anticipated fatigue.
- 2 to 4 hours for hazardous materials incidents.



Visual 3.23



Visual 3.24

- Multiple days for relatively stable situations and recovery actions such as debris removal.

The initial determination of the operational period may change later in the planning cycle based on development of the incident, but the initial determination is made in the Unified Command meeting.

PRIORITIES OF RESPONSE

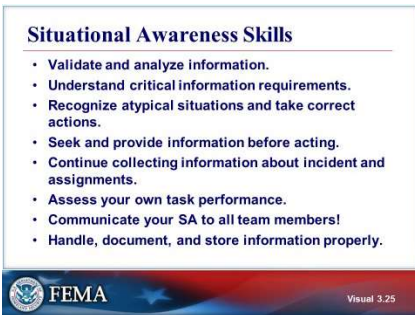
The overall response priorities guide, but are not identical to the priorities established during an incident by the IC/UC. For example, saving lives is a priority for response, but in an incident, the safety of responders is commonly prioritized above saving lives of those affected by the incident,

It is also important to understand that priorities are not mutually exclusive. You do not have to complete one priority before you can begin another. It is normally possible to support multiple priorities simultaneously.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

To maintain situational awareness, incident personnel:

- Continuously update incident information through collection, validation, and analysis
- Disseminate updated incident information that is shared between all appropriate parties

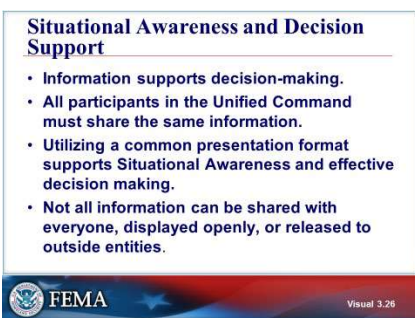


Visual 3.25

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS SKILLS

Situational awareness requires critical thinking skills.

- Validate and analyze information.
- Understand critical information requirements.
- Recognize the correct actions to take with information. Look for the unusual, information that deviates from the expected. Recognize and analyze information discrepancies before proceeding.
- Seek and provide information before acting. Ensure that you have verified the information is accurate and sufficient to support operational decisions. Inaccurate or incomplete information can result in poor operational decisions.
- Continue collecting information about incident.
- Assess your own task performance.
- Communicate your SA to all team members!
- Properly handle, document, and store information.

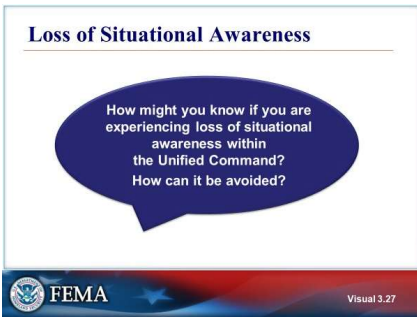


Visual 3.26

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS AND DECISION SUPPORT

Situational Awareness and Decision Support means that all participants in the Unified Command share the same information in a common presentation format that supports effective decision making. Normally this is accomplished through a single, identical summary of critical incident information that is shared by all responders and organizations. In the ICS courses, this is referred to as a Shared Situational Picture. Some organizations may refer to this as common operating picture.

Share as much verified information as possible with other agencies, organizations, jurisdictions, and the public; however, understand that not all information can be shared with everyone, displayed openly, or released to outside entities.



Visual 3.27

LOSS OF SITUATIONAL AWARENESS



Visual 3.28

COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS FACTORS

Complexity analysis involves that combination of factors that affect the probability of control of an incident. Cascading events or incidents occur as a direct or indirect result of an initial event or incident. For example, as the result of a hazardous materials spill a neighborhood must be evacuated and a local stream is contaminated. Taken together, the effect of cascading events or incidents can be crippling to a community.

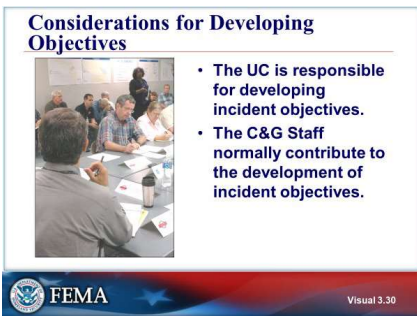


Visual 3.29

COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS FACTORS (CONT.)

Additional factors that can affect incident complexity:

- Potential crime scene (including terrorism).
- Political sensitivity, external influences, and media relations.
- Area involved and jurisdictional boundaries.
- Availability of resources.



Visual 3.30



CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES

The Unified Command is responsible for developing incident objectives. The Command and General Staff normally contribute to the development of incident objectives. However, the Unified Command is still responsible for the incident objectives.

Considerations for Developing Objectives (Cont.)

Objectives should consider demob requirements. Demobilization will occur during the life cycle of the incident/event.

- Demobilization of resources
- Planning ahead for final demobilization

Visual 3.31

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES (CONT.)

Demobilization will occur during the life cycle of the incident/event.

The IC/UC should demobilize resources no longer required or reassigned to other incidents. This may include individuals demobilized due to personal emergencies.

Plan ahead for final demobilization.

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics

Incident Objectives	State what will be accomplished.
Strategies	Establish the general plan or direction for accomplishing the incident objectives.
Tactics	Specify how the strategies will be executed.



Visual 3.32

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND TACTICS

- Incident objectives state what will be accomplished.
- Strategies establish the general plan or direction for accomplishing the incident objectives.
- Tactics specify how the strategies will be executed.

Life safety is the first priority, followed by incident stabilization, and then property conservation.

Writing “SMART” Objectives


Specific – Are words precise & unambiguous?

Measurable – How will achievements be measured?

Action Oriented – Is an action verb used to describe expected accomplishments?

Realistic – Is the outcome achievable with given available resources?


Time Sensitive – What is the timeframe (if applicable)?



Visual 3.33

Sample Objectives

- Complete evacuation of residents to the Walnford High School reception center by 1700 hours.
- Complete Preliminary Damage Assessments of all damaged residential structures in Anytown by 0800 hours on 3/21.
- Restore potable water to the business district.
- Contain fire within existing structures by 1800 hours on 3/21.



Visual 3.34

WRITING “SMART” OBJECTIVES

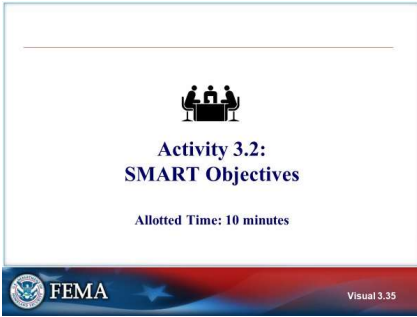
Incident objectives should have the following SMART characteristics:

- **Specific** – The wording must be precise and unambiguous in describing the objective.
- **Measurable** – The design and statement of objectives should make it possible to conduct a final accounting as to whether objectives were achieved.
- **Action Oriented** – The objective must have an action verb that describes the expected accomplishments.
- **Realistic** – Objectives must be achievable with the resources that the agency (and assisting agencies) can allocate to the incident, even though it may take several Operational Periods to accomplish them.
- **Time Sensitive** – The timeframe should be specified (if applicable).

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES

Read the following objectives:

- Complete evacuation of residents to the Walnford High School reception center by 1700 hours.
- Complete Preliminary Damage Assessments of all damaged residential structures in Anytown by 0800 hours on 3/21.
- Restore potable water to the business district.
- Contain fire within existing structures by 1800 hours on 3/21.



Visual 3.35

ACTIVITY 3.2: SMART OBJECTIVES

The instructor will explain Activity 3.2.

You will have 10 minutes to complete Activity 3.2.



Visual 3.36

STRATEGY/COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF MEETING

After developing or revising the incident objectives, the Incident Commander or Unified Command typically meets with the Command and General Staff, and sometimes others, to discuss the incident objectives and provide direction.

This meeting may be called the Strategy Meeting or the Command and General Staff Meeting and is held as needed to determine how best to meet the incident objectives.

The initial Strategy Meeting, which is held the first time through the planning cycle, is particularly important, because it allows team members to share information and jointly determine the initial approach to response operations.



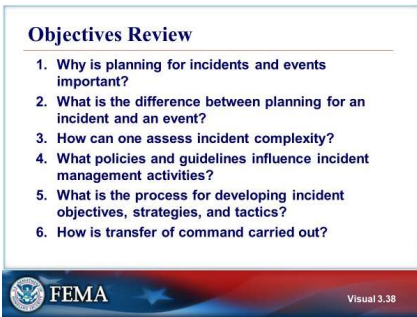
Visual 3.37

ACTIVITY 3.3 - APPLIED ACTIVITY

The instructor will explain Activity 3.3.

You will have 30 minutes to complete the activity and 30 minutes for an instructor-facilitated debrief (1 hour total).

Refer to Unit 3 of the Applied Activity Materials document.



Visual 3.38

OBJECTIVES REVIEW

Unit Enabling Objectives

- Identify the importance of planning for incidents/events.
- Contrast the differences between planning for incidents and events.
- Identify methods and tools used to assess incident/event complexity.
- Identify agency policies and guidelines that influence management of incident or event activities.
- Explain the process for developing incident objectives, strategies, and tactics.
- Identify the steps in transferring and assuming incident command.