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# Unit 4: Implementing an Operational Planning Process

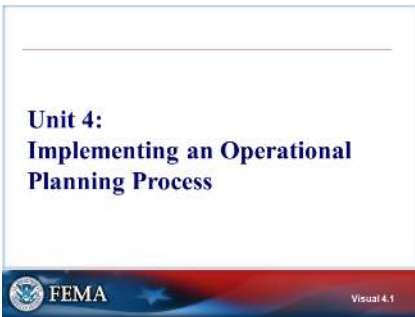
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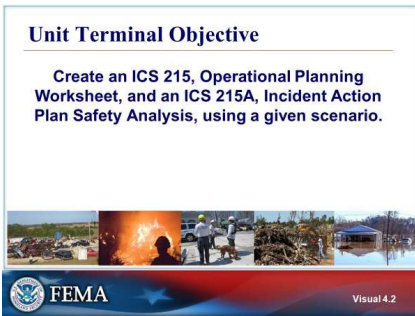
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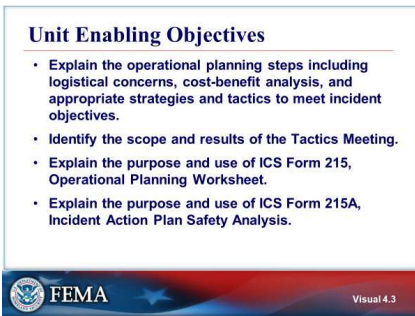
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Visual 4.1



Visual 4.2



Visual 4.3

## UNIT 4: IMPLEMENTING AN OPERATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

### UNIT TERMINAL OBJECTIVE

Create an ICS Form 215, Operational Planning Worksheet, and an ICS Form 215A, Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis, using a given scenario.

### UNIT ENABLING OBJECTIVES

- Explain the operational planning steps including logistical concerns, cost-benefit analysis, and appropriate strategies and tactics to meet incident objectives.
- Identify the scope and results of the Tactics Meeting.
- Explain the purpose and use of ICS Form 215, Operational Planning Worksheet.
- Explain the purpose and use of ICS Form 215A, Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis.

The Final Exam is based on the Unit Enabling Objectives.



Visual 4.4

## THE TACTICS MEETING: OVERVIEW

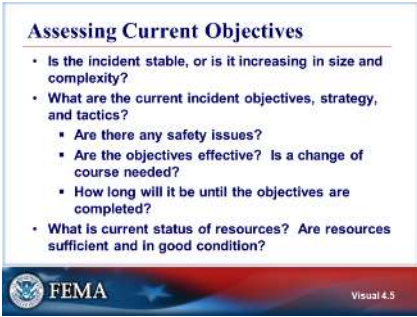
**Purpose** - The purpose of the Tactics Meeting is to review the proposed strategy and tactics developed by the Operations Section. This includes:

- Determining how the selected strategy or strategies will be accomplished to achieve the incident objectives.
- Assigning resources to implement the tactics.
- Identifying methods for monitoring tactics and resources to determine if adjustments are required (e.g., different tactics, different resources, or new strategy).

**Preparation** - Once the incident objectives are determined, the Operations Section Chief and staff prepare for the Tactics Meeting by developing tactics and determining the resources that will be applied during the operational period. Note that this is a distinct step in the planning cycle “Preparing for the Tactics Meeting.” It is not a meeting; It is a period of time in which key preparation activities occur that will enable final decisions to be made during the Tactics Meeting.

**Attendees** - The Operations Section Chief, Safety Officer, Planning Section Chief or a planning representative (Resource Unit Leader), Logistics Section Chief, and other technical specialists or invited team members attend the Tactics Meeting.

**Leaders** - The Operations Section Chief leads the Tactics Meeting. The ICS Form 215, Operational Planning Worksheet, and the ICS Form 215A, Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis, are used to facilitate and document decisions made during the Tactics Meeting.



Visual 4.5

## ASSESSING CURRENT OBJECTIVES

Starting at the beginning of the Operational Period, before the tactics meeting, the incident objectives were assessed by the IC/UC and updated as needed.

Below are questions to ask when assessing objectives:

- Is the incident stable, or is it increasing in size and complexity?
- What are the current incident objectives, strategy, and tactics?
  - Are there any safety issues?
  - Are the objectives effective? Is a change of course needed?
  - How long will it be until the objectives are completed?
- What is the current status of resources? Are resources in good condition? Are there sufficient resources?

When immediate action is required, changes may be implemented prior to the issuance of the next written IAP.



Visual 4.6

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND TACTICS

- **Incident objectives** state what is to be accomplished in the Operational Period.  
The incident objectives can be found on the ICS Form 201 or ICS Form 202. The Incident Command/Unified Command establishes the incident objectives and overall strategies.
- **Strategies** establish the general plan or direction for accomplishing the incident objectives.  
The IC has created and briefed the incident objectives. Now it is time for the Operations Section Chief to translate the objectives and strategies into tactics.
- **Tactics** specify how the strategies will be executed.

**Developing Strategies**

- Generate a list of strategies.
- Select the strategy that:
  - Is within acceptable safety norms.
  - Makes good sense (feasible, practical, and suitable).
  - Is cost effective.
  - Is consistent with sound environmental practices.
  - Meets political considerations.



Visual 4.7

Visual 4.7

**Executing Tactical Direction**

- **Establish Tactics:** Describe what must be done.
- **Assign Resources:** Determine and assign the kind and type of resources needed for the selected tactics.
- **Monitor Performance:** Determine if the tactics and resources selected for the various strategies are both valid and adequate.




Visual 4.8

Visual 4.8

## DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

Guidelines when developing an appropriate strategy:

- First, the Operations Section Chief generates strategies to meet the incident objectives.
- Next, the Operations Section Chief selects a strategy (or strategies) that:
  - Is within acceptable safety norms.
  - Makes good sense (feasible, practical, and suitable).
  - Is cost effective.
  - Is consistent with sound environmental practices.
  - Meets political considerations.

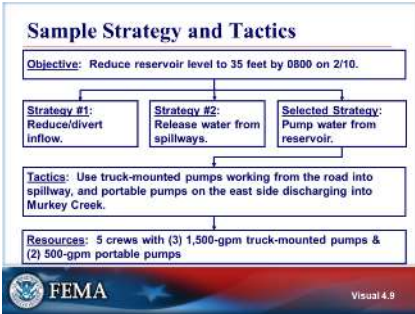
## EXECUTING TACTICAL DIRECTION

Tactical direction is developed based on the Incident Objectives. It describes what must be accomplished within the selected strategy or strategies in order to achieve the incident objectives. Tactical direction is the responsibility the Operations Section Chief (if an OSC has not been assigned then the Incident Commander/ Unified Command takes responsibility).

Gathering input is particularly important when the incident involves personnel from multiple disciplines. Jointly developed tactics can ensure understanding and enhance commitment. To accomplish this, the Operations Section Chief gathers input from the Branch Directors and Division and/or Group Supervisors.

Tactical direction consists of the following steps:

- Establish Tactics:
- Assign Resources:
- Monitor Performance:



Visual 4.9



Visual 4.10

## SAMPLE STRATEGY AND TACTICS

- The **objective** is: Reduce reservoir level to 35 feet by 0800 on 2/10.
- Three possible **strategies** are identified and one is selected: Pump water from reservoir.
- The **tactics** for the selected strategy are: Use truck-mounted pumps working from the road into spillway, and portable pumps on the east side discharging into Murkey Creek.

Once the tactics have been selected, the next step is to determine what and how many resources will be needed to accomplish the tactics.

## LOGISTICS SUPPORT FACTORS

When determining tactical operations, consider the following personnel and logistical support factors:

- If the required tactical resources will not be available, then an adjustment should be made to the tactics and operations planned for the Operational Period.
- The lack of logistical support can mean the difference between success and failure. Lack of available resources could require a reassessment of tactics and perhaps the overall strategy.

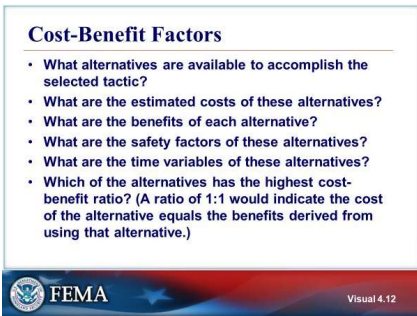
It is very important that tactical resource availability and other needed support are determined prior to investing time on strategies and tactical operations that realistically cannot be achieved.

Tactical planning is dependent on resource availability and may affect accomplishment of objectives.



Visual 4.11

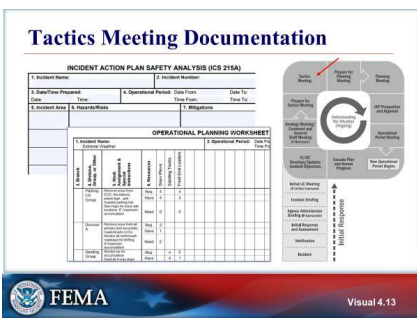
## COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS



Visual 4.12

## COST-BENEFIT FACTORS

- What alternatives are available to accomplish the selected tactic?
- What are the estimated costs of these alternatives?
- What are the benefits of each alternative?
- What are the safety factors of these alternatives?
- What are the time variables of these alternatives?
- Which of the alternatives has the highest cost-benefit ratio? (A ratio of 1:1 would indicate the cost of the alternative equals the benefits derived from using that alternative.)



Visual 4.13

## TACTICS MEETING DOCUMENTATION

The Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS Form 215) and Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis (ICS Form 215A) are designed to document the results of the Tactics Meeting.

Refer to Handout 4-1: ICS Form 215, Operational Planning Worksheet and Handout 4-2: ICS Form 215A, Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis.

Tactical planning is dependent on resource availability and may affect accomplishment of objectives.



The image shows the Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215) form. It is a grid-based form with several sections:

- 1. Incident Name:** Includes fields for Incident Name, Extensive Weather, and Date From/To.
- 2. Operational Period:** Includes fields for Date From/To and Time From/To.
- 3. Resources:** A grid for listing resources, including columns for Kind/Type, Resources Needed Next Operational Period, and Tactical Assignment.
- 4. Reporting:** Includes fields for Reporting Location, Reporting Time, and Reporting Agency.
- 5. Operations Section Organizational Element:** A section for listing organizational elements.

The form is labeled "Visual 4.14" and includes the FEMA logo and "Visual 4.14" text at the bottom.

Visual 4.14

## OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHEET

The ICS Form 215, Operational Planning Worksheet is a planning tool used to assist in establishing resource needs for an Operational Period. It communicates the decisions made during the Tactics Meeting concerning resource assignments to the Resources Unit. The Resources Unit uses the worksheet to complete Assignment Lists (ICS Form 204s) and the Logistics Section Chief uses the worksheet for ordering resources for the incident.

The ICS Form 215 is initiated prior to the Planning Meeting by the Incident Commander or the Operations Section Chief, who uses the worksheet to plan resource requirements for the next Operational Period. The ICS Form 215 reflects resources available for assignment during the next Operational Period (information provided by Resources Unit in Planning Section) and it is used as a display during the Planning Meeting where it is finalized based on contributions from the Command and General Staffs.

Provides information on:

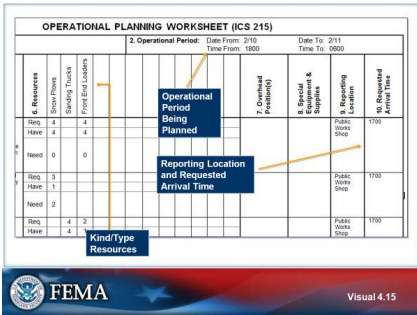
- Work assignments (Branch, Division, Group, or other).
- Kind of resources needed, required, and/or already have.
- Any specialized equipment or supplies that may be needed.
- Reporting location.
- Requested arrival time for additional resources.
- Total number of resources that need to be ordered for the next Operational Period.

By using the worksheet, planners can:

- Determine total resources required (for example: 25 personnel).
- Subtract the number on hand (for example: -12).
- Determine additional resources needed (for example: 13).

The ICS Form 215 can show graphically that span of control is appropriate. It can also help to identify surplus resources that may be released. Some agencies that regularly use the Planning Worksheet have prepared it in a larger format on a whiteboard or have developed electronic versions for display on a large screen. This makes the worksheet visible to a larger audience at planning meetings.

Although agencies and jurisdictions may have their own systems for tracking resources, the ICS Form 215 should be used to ensure that there is shared awareness by all participants in the Unified command of what tactical resources are needed.



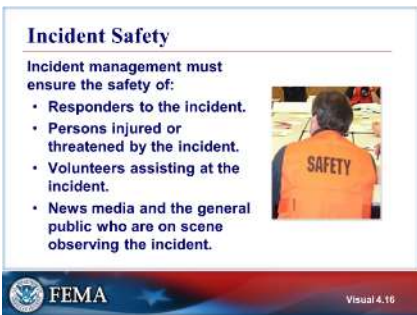
Visual 4.15

### OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHEET (CONT.)

The worksheet provides an area to indicate:

- Operational period being planned, incident name, and the name and position of the person preparing the ICS Form 215.
- Kind of resources.
- Reporting location for resources.
- Requested arrival time of resources.

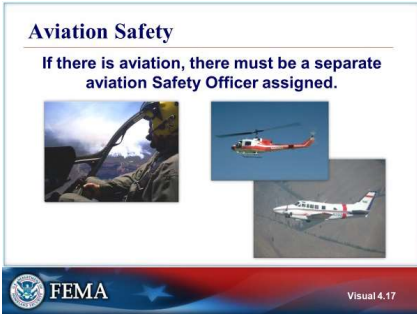
Resource typing is defining and categorizing incident resources by capability. Typed resources are identified by capability, category, kind and type. The Resource Typing Library Tool (RTL) is an online catalog of NIMS resourcing typing definitions. Resource typing is discussed in Unit 6 of this course.



Visual 4.16

### INCIDENT SAFETY

Before the planning meeting, either the Safety Officer or Incident Commander must complete an analysis of the safety concerns related to the tactics and resources being deployed through the use of the Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis (ICS Form 215A).



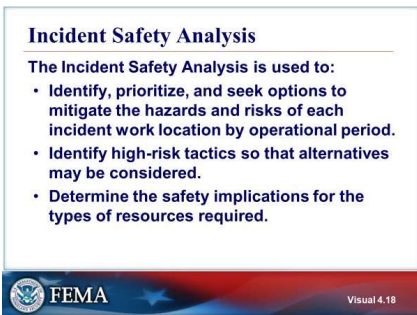
Visual 4.17

## AVIATION SAFETY

When aviation is used, there are specific aviation policies, procedures and requirements.

Most agencies do not conduct routine major air operations, so it is unlikely that they will have personnel trained to manage aviation tactical and support operations. Part of the resource pre-incident planning should include the identification of where you can acquire aviation management expertise when needed.

Contact your State Aviation Officer and refer to the State and Regional Disaster Airlift (SARDA) plan for assistance. Other sources of expertise include the U.S. Coast Guard, National Guard Aviation Units, and State and Federal wildland management agencies.



Visual 4.18

## INCIDENT SAFETY ANALYSIS

Purpose of the Incident Safety Analysis:

- Identify, prioritize, and seek options to mitigate the hazards and risks of each incident work location by Operational Period.
- Identify high-risk tactics so that alternatives may be considered.
- Determine the safety implications for the types of resources required.



given to the Documentation unit. Refer to Handout 4-2: ICS Form 215A, Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis.

The Safety Officer or the Incident Commander/Unified Command should coordinate, develop, and approve an ICS Form 215A, Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis, for each Operational Period with the Operations Section Chief.

ICS Form 215A is a tool used by the Safety Officer as a concise way of identifying hazards and risks present in different areas of the incident and specific ways of mitigating those issues during an Operational Period.

The objective of the Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis is to identify and mitigate the hazards and risks of each incident work location by Operational Period. The mitigation methods selected may affect the resources required for the incident work location. The Safety Analysis may also reveal that the proposed tactic is too hazardous to attempt and another tactic must be developed.

ICS Form 215A is used as a display during the Planning Meeting. It provides information on:

- Incident work location(s)
- Risk mitigations
- Date (daily) prepared by Operation Section Chief/Safety Officer and approved by Safety Officer

#### **Techniques for Identifying Hazards**

- Personal observation and/or experience
- Checklist
- Communication with incident personnel
- Personnel

#### **Types of Risks**

- Traffic
- Driving hazards
- Dehydration
- Fatigue

- Confined space
- Downhill fireline construction
- Air operations
- Hazardous materials (chemical, biological, and radiation)
- Secondary devices/explosive
- Slip, trip, and fall
- Weather
- Limited visibility
- Structural instability
- Civil unrest
- Criminal intent with hostile acts
- Critical incident stress

**Locations**

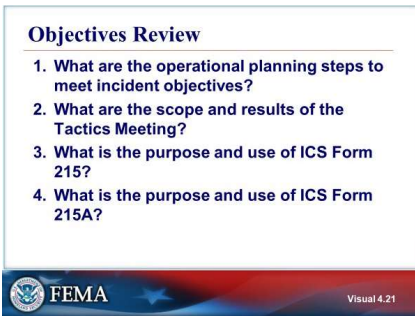
- Divisions
- Groups
- Helibase
- Staging Area
- Emergency Operations Center
- Others

**Mitigation of Hazards**

- L - Use lookouts
- C - Maintain communications with personnel
- E - Identification of escape routes
- S - Use of safety zones
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Proper clothing for inclement weather
- Reflective clothing and lights for nighttime or low-light operations
- Maintain awareness of landing zones
- Monitoring personnel well-being



Visual 4.20



Visual 4.21

## ACTIVITY 4.1: APPLIED ACTIVITY

The instructor will explain Activity 4.1.

You will have 60 minutes to complete Activity 4.1 and 30 minutes of an instructor feedback.

Refer to Unit 4 of the Applied Activity Materials document.

## OBJECTIVES REVIEW

### Unit Enabling Objectives

- Explain the operational planning steps including logistical concerns, cost-benefit analysis, and appropriate strategies and tactics to meet incident objectives.
- Identify the scope and results of the Tactics Meeting.
- Explain the purpose and use of ICS Form 215, Operational Planning Worksheet.
- Explain the purpose and use of ICS Form 215A, Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis.