Quick ICS Role Assignment Guide for Supervisors

This guide provides a rapid-reference framework for assigning Incident Command System (ICS) roles during emergencies or special operations. Even in smaller incidents, activating key roles improves efficiency, safety, and communication.

Key ICS Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Primary Responsibilities	When to Activate
Incident Commander (IC)	Responsible for managing the incident, setting objectives, and ensuring safety. Coordinates all sections and maintains big-picture oversight.	Every incident—designate immediately.
Public Information / Liaison Officer	Handles media inquiries, public updates, and inter-agency communication. Ensures accurate and timely information sharing.	When public/media involvement or multi-agency coordination is required.
Operations Section Chief	Manages tactical operations, assigns field units, and oversees on-scene resources.	When multiple teams or complex field operations are involved.
Safety Officer	Monitors scene conditions, identifies hazards, and has authority to stop unsafe actions.	When hazards are present or safety oversight is critical.
Logistics Section Chief	Manages equipment, supplies, personnel needs, and resource requests.	In prolonged operations or when resources are stretched.
Planning Section Chief	Tracks resources, develops Incident Action Plans, and maintains situational documentation.	When long-term planning or detailed coordination is required.

Establishing a Clear Chain of Command

- Ensure each person reports to only one supervisor within the ICS structure
- Keep span of control between 5–7 personnel per supervisor.
- Communicate the structure to all involved units and partner agencies.

Rapid Activation Checklist

1. Designate an Incident Commander immediately.
2. Assign key roles based on incident size and complexity.
3. Communicate the chain of command and reporting procedures.
4. Document assignments for accountability.
5. Adjust roles as the incident evolves.