COMPANION GUIDE TO ONLINE TRAINING

Companion to the OPS-03 self-study online lessons — fortunefavorsthepreparedcom

Incident Command System (ICS/NIMS) for MAGs

The MAG Command Structure Reference

Reference tables, the OPS-01 role-mapping key, and blank worksheets for building your MAG's command package.
Companion to the OPS-03 six-lesson self-study series.

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Semper Paratus, Semper Gumby
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How to Use This Companion Guide

> **THIS GUIDE IS A COMPANION TO THE OPS-03 SELF-STUDY ONLINE LESSONS**
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> This guide is built to be used alongside the OPS-03 self-study lesson series — the online lessons are the instruction. This guide contains condensed reference summaries, the OPS-01 role-mapping key, and blank worksheets only. It is not a standalone document.

Self-study lessons: fortunefavorstheprepared.com/ops-03-landing/

What This Guide Contains

For each of the six online lessons: a condensed reference summary covering the key frameworks and terms — not the instruction itself. The full ICS/MAG role-mapping table, the span-of-control rule, the transfer-of-command sequence, and the five-field briefing format are included as working references. Blank worksheets for building your own MAG's org chart, delegation-of-authority statement, and initial briefing are in Part III.

Recommended Workflow — Online Lessons Before Using This Guide

> **ORDER MATTERS**
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> Do not fill out any worksheet in this guide until the corresponding online lesson has been completed. The condensed summaries here are reference material, not instruction. The sequence below is recommended, not optional, if you want the worksheets to actually make sense.

1. Access the self-study lessons at fortunefavorstheprepared.com/ops-03-landing/
2. Complete the Course Introduction and all six lessons (OPS-03-00 through OPS-03-06), including knowledge checks
3. Use Part II of this guide to build your MAG's own ICS org chart, delegation-of-authority statement, and briefing template
4. Use Part III's worksheets to complete the Lesson 6 capstone for your actual MAG
5. Keep this guide with your OPS-01 and OPS-02 materials as a living reference

PART I

Lesson Reference Summaries

Condensed reference only — complete the online lesson before using each summary below.

Lesson 0 — Course Introduction

TWO DIFFERENT SYSTEMS: GOVERNANCE VS. INCIDENT RESPONSE

ICS is not how your MAG runs its day-to-day business. Routine decisions — consensus, vote, council, standing lead — are an OPS-01 governance matter. ICS activates only for a declared incident response, with a single Incident Commander and Management by Objectives. Many MAGs use the same person in both roles; that's a choice, not a requirement.

	Day-to-Day Governance (OPS-01)	Incident Response (OPS-03)
When it applies	All the time — meetings, planning, membership, budget	Only during a declared activation or response
How decisions get made	Consensus, vote, council, or standing lead — the MAG's choice	Management by Objectives under a single Incident Commander
Who's in charge	Determined by the MAG's own governance model	Whoever is designated Group Lead for this incident

Lesson 1 — Why Borrow a Federal System?

ICS traces back to FIRESCOPE (FIrefighting RESources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies), a federal research program formed after the 1970 Southern California wildfire season (773 fires in 13 days, 16 lives lost, 700+ structures destroyed) exposed a coordination failure between independent agencies fighting the same fires. FIRESCOPE's work was adopted nationally by 1982. NIMS came over two decades later — established by DHS in 2004 following the post-9/11 Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, incorporating ICS as its command component. Both solve organizational problems, not legal ones.

Principle	What It Means
Common Terminology	Everyone uses the same words for the same things
Modular Organization	Build only the structure the situation requires
Management by Objectives	Leaders state the outcome, not the method
Unity of Command	Each person answers to exactly one supervisor at a time
Manageable Span of Control	One leader directs 3–7 people, 5 is ideal

Lesson 2 — Building the MAG's ICS Structure

Command Staff and General Staff positions exist for any incident size. A MAG's version has smaller numbers and more dual-hatting.

Reminder: this is an incident-time structure only. It stands up on OPS-02's activation trigger and collapses back down once the incident ends — it doesn't change how the MAG runs day-to-day.

Only one role carries directly across from OPS-01 without translation: Group Lead → Incident Commander. Everything else below is either a genuine gap OPS-01 doesn't fill, or a pillar lead's expertise finding a natural — not mandatory — home in the ICS structure.

ICS Position	Where It Comes From	Staffed
Incident Commander	Group Lead (OPS-01) — direct match	Every activation
Safety Officer	No OPS-01 equivalent — often the Deputy/Second	Every activation
Liaison Officer	No OPS-01 equivalent — often Intelligence or Comms Lead	Outside coordination only
Logistics Section Chief	Planning/Logistics Lead (OPS-01) — closest direct carryover	As needed
Planning Section Chief	Intelligence Lead (OPS-01) — situational awareness translates directly	As needed
Operations Section Chief	Security, Medical, or Navigation Lead (OPS-01), whichever fits the incident	As needed
Finance/Admin Chief	Folded into Logistics	As needed

Lesson 3 — Running Initial Response

TRANSFER OF COMMAND — FOUR STEPS

1. First member on scene assumes command by default — never a vacuum.
2. Interim IC runs the response, tracks status and decisions made so far.
3. Designated Group Lead arrives and receives a full briefing before acting.
4. Command formally transfers — stated out loud to the whole group.

THE BRIEFING — SAME FIVE FIELDS AS SALUTE / COMMUNITY SITREP

Situation — Objectives set so far — Org chart as built — Resources committed — Open issues

ICS-211 CHECK-IN — WHO'S ACTUALLY ON-SITE

Name, arrival time, contact info, where they came from, assignment. Drop the federal form's NIMS resource-typing, Order Request numbers, and Strike Team/Task Force fields — none apply at MAG scale. A natural fit for the Safety Officer, since accounting for people is the foundation of watching for hazards to them.

ICS-214 ACTIVITY LOG — A RUNNING RECORD, NOT A ONE-TIME BRIEFING

Individual version (no Resources Assigned block) for general members and single-role Section Chiefs; full version (adds Resources Assigned) for the Group Lead, tracking the whole activation. Log entries as they happen — date/time, task assignments and completions, difficulties encountered, decisions made. A notebook with timestamps counts.

Lesson 4 — Working With Real Responders

UNIFIED COMMAND — COORDINATE, DON'T SUBORDINATE

When your MAG and an official Incident Commander share a scene, neither reports to the other. Agree on shared objectives; each side executes with its own people.

NEVER

Never let your MAG take orders directly from an official IC's chain of command, and never expect the official IC to take orders from your Group Lead. Unified Command is coordination, not subordination in either direction.

Lesson 5 — Where the MAG Fits in the Bigger System

Local (fire/police/EMS/county) → State (EOC, National Guard) → Federal (FEMA, ESFs). Your household and MAG are the base of this system, often the entire response for the first hours or days before any outside escalation occurs. Connects directly to Community Lifelines (PLN-01).

PART II

Doctrinal Source Mapping

Lesson	Primary FEMA Source	What's Kept
1	IS-100, IS-700	History, five core principles, ICS/NIMS relationship
2	IS-100, IS-200	Command/General Staff structure, span of control, modularity
3	IS-200	MBO, delegation of authority, briefings, transfer of command
4	IS-700; IS-300/400 (compressed)	Common terminology, Unified Command, resource typing, mutual aid
5	IS-800	Escalation structure, realistic expectations, Lifelines cross-reference
6 (Capstone)	Applies Lessons 1–5	Full command package for the student's own MAG

Get Officially Credentialed

THIS GUIDE DOES NOT CARRY A FEMA CREDENTIAL

OPS-03 teaches ICS/NIMS logic adapted for MAG scale, but it is not FEMA's own training and does not issue FEMA's certificate. Many local emergency management agencies, CERT programs, and volunteer organizations require completion of FEMA's actual Independent Study courses before a volunteer is recognized to work alongside official response. All four below are free and self-paced through FEMA's Emergency Management Institute.

Course	Link
IS-100.c — Introduction to ICS	training.fema.gov/programs/independent-study/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.c
IS-200.c — Basic ICS for Initial Response	training.fema.gov/programs/independent-study/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-200.c
IS-700.b — An Introduction to NIMS	training.fema.gov/programs/independent-study/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-700.b
IS-800.d — National Response Framework, An Introduction	training.fema.gov/programs/independent-study/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-800.d

Course version letters update periodically. Full current list: training.fema.gov/programs/independent-study/crslist.aspx

PART III

Worksheets

Complete these after finishing the corresponding online lesson. These are the same deliverables required for the Lesson 6 capstone.

WS-01: MAG ICS Org Chart Builder

Fill in your own MAG's members against each position. Leave a position blank if it isn't staffed by default — note when it would be stood up.

Incident Commander	
Safety Officer	
Liaison Officer	
Operations Chief	
Planning Chief	
Logistics Chief	
Finance/Admin	

WS-02: Delegation of Authority Statement

For each section lead, write the specific line between “act now, tell the IC after” and “check with the IC before acting.”

Operations	
Planning	
Logistics	
Finance/Admin	
Safety	

WS-03: Initial Incident Briefing Template

Use this template for the transfer-of-command briefing. All five fields must be covered before command formally transfers.

Situation	
Objectives	
Org Chart as Built	
Resources Committed	
Open Issues	

WS-04: Resource Typing Worksheet

Describe your MAG's capability in terms a responder can act on immediately — specific skills, equipment, and quantities, not general reassurance.

Category	Description	Quantity
Medical		
Communications		
Logistics/Supply		
Transportation		
Other		

WS-05: Check-In List (ICS-211)

Name, time, contact info, where they came from, assignment. A natural fit for whoever holds Safety Officer — keep it at the muster point as members arrive.

Name / Time	Contact / From / Assignment

WS-06: Activity Log (ICS-214)

A running record, not a one-time briefing — log entries as they happen. General members and single-role Section Chiefs use this individual version; the Group Lead should also track Resources Assigned (who's doing what across the whole activation) in a separate column or page. Photocopy this page as needed — a real activation runs longer than six lines.

Date/Time	Notable Activities

WS-07: Capstone Checklist

Before submitting your Lesson 6 capstone, confirm each item below.

- ICS org chart built and sized to your actual MAG (WS-01)
- Delegation-of-authority statement written and shared with each section lead (WS-02)
- Initial incident briefing drafted using all five fields (WS-03)
- Determination made on contacting official responders, using Lesson 4 terminology
- Package checked against the Hollow Creek MAG worked example in Lesson 2
- Every named role has an actual person who has agreed to fill it — not just a label