



DHS's NIMS Incident Command System (ICS) Planning Cycle Meeting and Briefings Video



Introduction

DHS's NIMS ICS Planning Cycle Meeting and Briefings Video was produced by DHS in an effort to standardize basic incident response planning processes across the country. In previous efforts to create a video along these lines, significant amounts of footage were shot of various Incident Management Teams (IMTs) at actual incidents. DHS determined that, as part of its support for the utilization of ICS, a video presenting as close as possible a complete Planning P cycle and meeting interactions would provide IMT personnel with a model for how the Planning P is used in practice. This video is the result of that decision.

Purpose of the Video

NIMS/ICS is designed so all responders can work together in a common environment. This includes a common planning process that results in an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that everyone recognizes and can execute to meet the intent of the Agency Administrators (AA) and Incident Commanders (IC). It is imperative for purposes of incident safety and response effectiveness that responders understand and use the same planning process.

The purpose of the video is to show how the ICS Planning Process works in practice. The Planning P lays out the sequential steps that successful IMTs use to manage an incident. The stem of the Planning P shows the processes in the initial stages of an incident while the circle part of the P shows the repeated processes that continue until the end of the incident when the planning process is no longer required.

This DVD was designed to be used as a supplement to DHS's NIMS curriculum that is taught to incident response personnel. Although it can be used in a stand alone format, the video was designed with the intent that instructors would provide additional context and answer student/viewer questions about the planning process depicted in the video. The video is especially useful for personnel who have not had the opportunity to participate at an actual incident where the ICS Planning process is employed. In addition, the video helps to standardize the understanding of the planning process, which is essential for IMTs. The video was vetted by experienced practitioners who have successfully performed many of these activities hundreds of times on actual incidents as well as routinely instruct the material to a wide variety of audiences.

Scenario Overview

In addition to demonstrating the basic ICS Planning Process, the scenario selected for this video contains several key features that have been shown to be key building blocks in actual complex incidents and reinforces lessons taught in DHS's NIMS curriculum. The scenario consists of an overturned tractor trailer involving fifteen 300 gallon containers full of the pesticide diazinon, plus about 200 gallons of diesel from the truck's fuel tanks. Jefferson County (a fictional county in the Commonwealth of Virginia) is in Unified Command (UC) with the ICs from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Virginia State police and Virginia Department of Transportation act as Assisting Agencies and are not in Unified Command. The Jefferson County IMT is filling all Command and General Staff positions under the Unified Commanders.

Video Chapter Outline

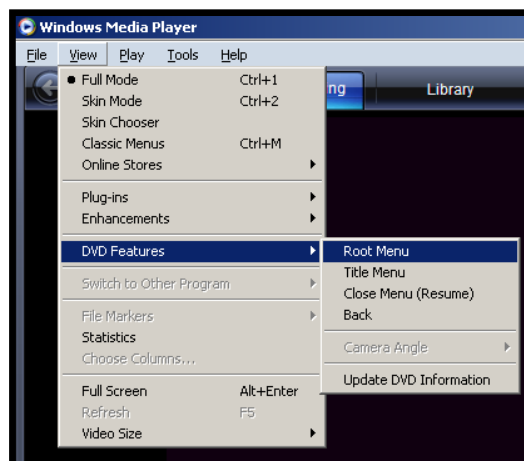
The video is comprised of 11 chapters, each of which covers a different phase of the Planning P. Though the comprehensive video is 45 minutes, the outline below identifies the time allocated to each chapter or phase of the Planning P.

Chapter	Time
1. Introduction	2 ½ minutes
2. Agency Administrator Briefing	6 minutes
3. Incident Briefing ICS 201	½ minute
4. Initial UC Meeting & IC/UC Sets Initial Unified Incident Objectives	3 ½ minutes
5. Initial Strategy Meeting	4 ½ minutes
6. Tactics Meeting	4 minutes
7. Prepare for the Planning Meeting	½ minute
8. Planning Meeting	9 minutes
9. IAP Preparation and Approval	1 minute
10. Operational Period Briefing	10 minutes
11. Conclusion	2 ½ minutes

Video Navigation

The DVD is designed to self-launch when you load it into the DVD player or computer. Depending on your computer settings, the software that plays the video may be different than the software referenced here. When the video menu appears on the screen, you can select any of the chapters you wish to play in any sequence.

If you are using Windows Media Player to play the video, you can navigate between chapters by selecting “View,” then “DVD Features.” The selection of “Root Menu” will direct you to the “Chapter Menu” screen where you can easily select the portion of the video you want to play.



Preparing to Use the Video

Because the video was intended to be used within the context of a training course, it is important that instructors have experience within the ICS Planning Process so that you will be able to answer student questions or provide explanations of why certain elements are covered in specific parts of the Planning P.

The following pages comprise the supplemental *Planning Cycle Meeting and Briefings Video Instructor Guide* developed for DHS's NIMS curriculum. This guide will assist you in identifying the best application of portions of the video in each course.

Planning Cycle Meeting and Briefings Video Instructor Guide

This video was developed as a result of the course pilots when it was determined that there was a need to provide students with more concrete examples of the planning process. As the instructor, you are best equipped to determine how the video should be used to meet the needs of your students. Depending on the experience level of the students, you may determine that showing the full video provides context that is helpful in increasing the students understanding of the full planning cycle. Pages 4-6 of this guide offer suggestions for key instructional points to supplement the course. There are also several options for showing the video:

Option 1: Show Entire Video: Show video in its entirety to provide context and a description of the planning cycle as a whole. Some instructors have chosen options 1 and 3, meaning they show the video in its entirety at the beginning of the course and then again intermittently as they cover the Planning P throughout the course.

Option 2: Show Entire Video in Three Segments: Show video in segments providing instruction in-between. (Suggested segments are identified on pages 4-6 of this guide).

Option 3: Show Select Video Chapters: Show video in portions where they fit within existing course material.

Key Instructional Points

The following points can be used with all three options, and are valuable to provide context as well as transition from the course to the video chapters.

Introduction to the Video

The planning process you are about to see has been used with great success on all types of incidents. The planning process origins go back to the 1970s as part of the development of ICS to address interagency responses to large incidents. It has worked for decades over and over again in all types of incidents. It doesn't matter what type of incident it is, this process is the same and works every time.

Segment 1

Agency Administrator Briefing

The AA briefing chapter is not only valuable to the IMT, but it also shows how AAs fit into the process and how their role is critical to the success of the IMT. IMTs are taught how important the AA briefing is and how to gather information as they prepare to assume command of a large incident. This interaction between the AA and IMT at the beginning and throughout the incident ensures the agency policies and regulations are met.

Incident Briefing ICS 201

In the beginning phases of every incident there is an initial response organization and IC. When this initial organization must be replaced by an IMT the process is called a "Transfer of Command". In order to maintain continuity and safety of the current responders and the public, the transfer of command must be controlled and orderly. The ICS Form 201 is a tool used to accomplish this step.

In some cases the Initial IC is not able to leave the ICP to attend the AA briefing. In this case the incoming IC to initial IC briefing is accomplished later at the ICP, utilizing the ICS Form 201. Regardless of the location, this information exchange must be accomplished.

Initial UC Meeting & IC/UC Sets Initial Unified Incident Objectives

Just by saying you are in Unified Command does not make it so. There are several decisions and tasks that must be accomplished to set up UC and maintain it throughout the incident. The initial UC meeting is the foundation of that process. It is recommended that IMTs practice UC in exercises and drills. By demonstrating this meeting in this video, potential ICs can get exposure to how this meeting is conducted and what is expected of them.

Segment 2

Initial Strategy and Information Sharing Meeting

All of the incoming IMT members immediately begin to gather information about the incident as they prepare to assume command. Sometimes they obtain critical information that is important to other members of the IMT. The Initial Strategy and Information Sharing meeting is a forum for the ICs to issue their decisions and direction as well as for all IMT members to share any critical information they have obtained up to that point.

The most successful IMTs are the ones that have developed highly effective communication skills. Information sharing and follow up cannot be overemphasized. The meeting you just saw sets the stage for that process and provides the Unified ICs the opportunity to set the tone for the incident.

Tactics Meeting

The Tactics Meeting is one of the least understood steps for people new to the ICS Planning Process. It is usually a much simpler step than people tend to make it. The video provides a head start on the purpose and format of this meeting.

Once the IMT understands the Tactics Meeting the Planning Meetings go much smoother with fewer modifications or debate since the key players have worked out details and mitigations ahead of time.

Prepare for the Planning Meeting

The next step in the Planning P is a period of time, not a meeting. During this time the IMT has many tasks to accomplish to be ready for the Planning Meeting. Successful IMTs are always prepared for the meeting and have already worked out any issues so the presentation of the plan for the next operational period is as complete as it can be.

There shouldn't be any major surprises from the IMT at the Planning Meeting. If they have done a good job in the preparation it should be more of a presentation of a product than a meeting where the plan is being created from scratch.

Segment 3

Planning Meeting

The Planning Meeting is a window into the inner workings of the IMT. It must be well organized, efficient and effective. This gives participants and observers confidence that the plan is well thought out and reasonable. You'll notice in the video that there are Agency Administrators and Representatives from Assisting and Cooperating Agencies. This is common and other VIPs may attend also. You can see why it is important to ensure this meeting is well understood and executed.

While watching the video, you may have noticed that the Planning Section Chief (PSC) obtained some sort of physical acknowledgement that the plan can be supported by those who have a role in the process. This is a technique that minimizes second guessing and requests for changes after the meeting is adjourned. This is one of the meeting facilitation skills that instructors emphasize in position training for the ICs and PSCs.

IAP Preparation and Approval

The IAP Preparation and Approval phase is another period of time, not a meeting. Students must realize that they must accomplish this on schedule. The ICs need to review and approve the IAP in time for many copies to be made for the Operational Briefing. The copy job can take hours on large incidents. The IMT must understand that they are under a tight time frame and must stick to it.

This chapter of the video reinforces the training and expected teamwork required to keep on schedule. Each IMT member can recognize the tasks he or she must accomplish which come together in a finished product.....the IAP.

Operational Period Briefing

The Operational Period Briefing transfers all the previous decisions, planning and preparation over to the tactical supervisors so they can accomplish their part of the incident objectives in a safe and efficient manner. The video demonstrates a typical briefing. Just as in the Planning Meeting, the briefing must be complete and efficient so the responders feel they are about to execute a well thought out plan.

Upon conclusion of the briefing, the IMT responsibilities continue as they measure the effectiveness of their decisions, make adjustments, and prepare to start the cycle over again.

Remember, on a large incident requiring 24-hour a day staffing, this planning cycle may need to be accomplished twice a day, once for each 12-hour operational period.