

# Incident Command System

## Operations Section

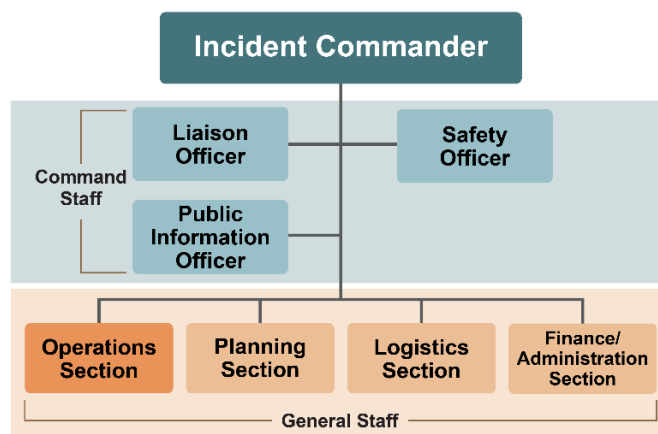


During an animal disease emergency, the Incident Command System (ICS) is utilized to coordinate personnel, tasks, and agencies, ensuring an efficient response. This Just-in-Time handout provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of personnel within the Operations Section of ICS.

### What is the ICS Operations Section?

**The Operations Section is a segment of the ICS General Staff.**

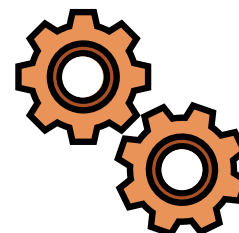
- Personnel assigned to this section will be responsible for performing the field-level tasks needed to meet the response goals outlined in the Incident Action Plan.
- Most resources used for response tasks (i.e., an individual responder, a piece of equipment and its operator, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor) are assigned to the Operations section.



### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Operations Section Supervision

- The Operations Section is managed and supervised by the **Operations Section Chief (OSC)**, who reports to the Incident Commander.
- The OSC assigns and directs all tactical personnel and resources for disease control and response strategies, determines additional resource needs, and monitors operational progress during the response.
- The OSC attends planning meetings to help develop the strategies and tactics needed to complete the incident action plan for each operational period.



#### Operations Section Personnel

Tasks that will fall within the Operations Section during animal emergency responses include:

- **Disease management**, such as case management, appraisal, euthanasia or mass depopulation, carcass disposal, cleaning and disinfection, or vaccination (when applicable).
- **Disease surveillance**, including mortality surveillance, diagnosis and inspection, or epidemiology.
- **Disease support** functions such as animal movement and permitting, biosecurity, education and outreach, or vector control.

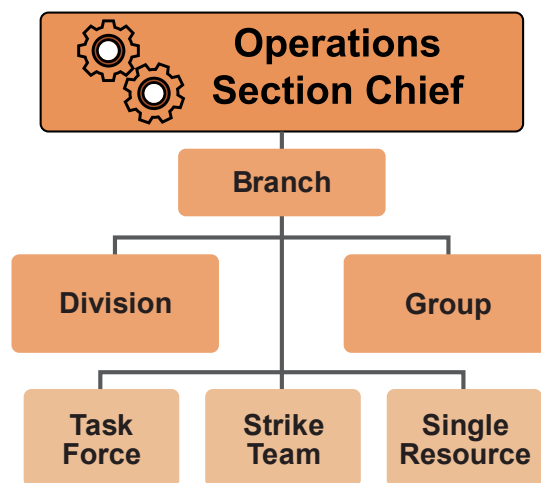
Operations personnel may have responsibilities in one specific area or multiple areas over several operational periods (e.g., on different days).

- For example, a veterinarian may perform diagnostic work on one day, and euthanasia or mass depopulation tasks on subsequent days.

## Operations Organizational Units

The Operations Section can consist of various subsections depending on the size and scale of the response, the required tasks, and the number of personnel involved.

- **Divisions** divide Operations personnel or tasks by geographical areas (e.g., a town or county). Each Division is led by a Division Supervisor, who reports to the OSC.
- **Groups** divide personnel or tasks into functional areas or assigned tasks (e.g., disease diagnosis, biosecurity, or carcass disposal). Led by a Group Supervisor, Groups are not limited geographically and work wherever needed, and are labeled by the job they are assigned to.
- A **Branch** may be used for larger responses to assemble several Divisions or Groups. Each Branch is led by a Branch Director, who may also designate Deputies to assist in management. A Branch can be either geographical or functional.
  - Divisions and Groups are at an equal level in the organization and can be used together for an incident. Division or Group Supervisors report to Branch Directors or the OSC.
- The Operations Section organization can include crews or teams with specific duties.
  - A **Task Force** involves a combination of mixed resources with a specific mission. For example, a Depopulation and Disposal Task Force, or a Cleaning and Disinfection or Biosecurity Task Force. Task Force members operate under the direct supervision of a Task Force Leader.
  - A **Strike Team** involves a group of similar resources (e.g., a surveillance strike team that conducts sampling on at-risk premises). Personnel are under the direct supervision of a Strike Team Leader.
  - **Single Resources** may be individuals, a piece of equipment and its operator, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor.
- A **Staging Area Manager** tracks all resources (personnel, equipment, teams) arriving at the Staging Area, and ensures they are ready for assignment.
- If a group within Operations is not staffed, the OSC is responsible for those functions and activities.



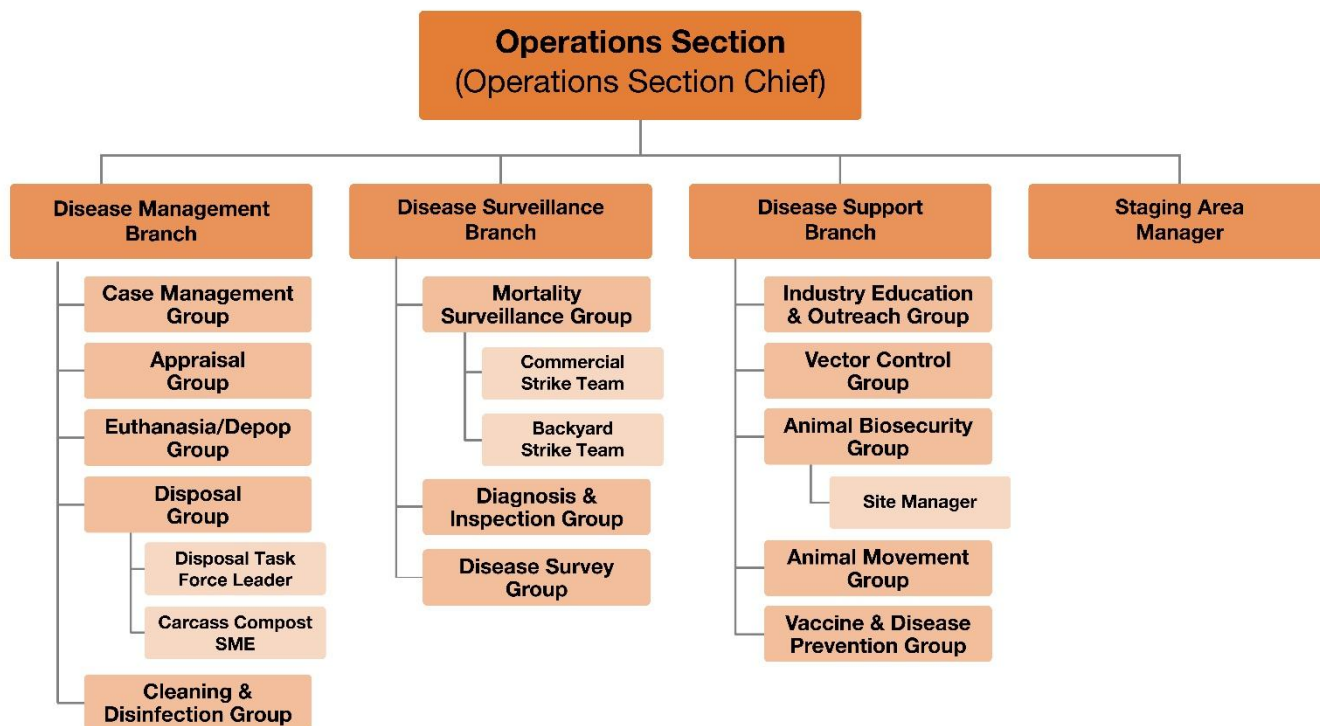
## How Animal Industry Stakeholders Can Help

Animal-industry stakeholders play a critical role in nearly every Operations Section branch. Their expertise, equipment, facilities, and local knowledge make them valuable partners in carrying out tactical field operations. Animal industry roles may include:

- Providing premises access and animal inventories,
- Supporting trace investigations (movement logs, feed routes, or personnel rosters),
- Assisting with humane animal care, handling and movement control,
- Implementing on-farm biosecurity measures,
- Providing equipment, supplies, facilities or specialized expertise for depopulation, disposal, cleaning and disinfection tasks, or operating transport vehicles, and
- Offering expertise on normal production patterns, barn layout or animal flow.

**Case Managers**, often part of the Operations Section, serve as the primary point of contact for owners and producers during an emergency response. They provide information, help answer questions, and serve as liaisons between producers and response personnel to coordinate actions such as depopulation and disposal, cleaning and disinfection, and, when applicable, indemnity and compensation claims.

## Example ICS Operations Section for an Animal Disease Emergency Response



## Key Points

- Personnel within the Operations Section perform field-level tasks needed to meet the response goals outlined in the Incident Action Plan.
  - A wide range of tasks fall under the Operations Section, including disease management, surveillance, and support functions.
  - Most response resources, including responders, are assigned to the Operations section.
- Animal industry stakeholders play a critical role in assisting and supporting the Operations Section.
- Depending on the size and scale of a response, the Operations Section may be divided into various groupings with standardized names. Understand your assigned role and who your supervisor is.



Additional [Just-In-Time training resources](#) can be found on the [CFSPH website](#).

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