

4.0 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: IMT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Incident Management Team (IMT) performs four key tasks that directly impact the organization and management of incident response operations. Upon activation, the IMT assumes command over incident response operations from the FRT. This period of time corresponds to when the IMT is in a reactive mode of operations. Once command is assumed, specific actions must be taken by the IMT to maintain command and control and to sustain ongoing incident response operations. The IMT then engages in short-term planning, which results in the preparation of Incident Action Plans. The IMT further engages in long-term planning, which results in the preparation of a General Plan.

Other IMT tasks include:

- Sizing up the incident and field response operations.
- Developing objectives, strategies, and response priorities.
- Gathering information on the nature and location of field response operations and the resources being used to carry out the operations.
- Securing the resources necessary to support field response operations.
- Working with the FRT to develop Incident Action Plans describing field assignments for the next operational period.
- Securing the resources necessary to implement Incident Action Plans.
- Preparing a General Plan that scopes emergency response operations from initial notification to the completion of demobilization operations.
- Securing the resources necessary to implement the General Plan.
- Instituting and enforcing appropriate financial controls.
- Continuously assessing incident potential to determine an incident's capacity to grow into a crisis situation.
- Establishing reasonable work schedules through personnel replacement and shift rotations.

4.2 ASSUMING COMMAND AND CONTROL

4.2.1 Activation

Incident Management Team emergency response operations normally are carried out in an Incident Command Post (ICP) that is geographically removed from the field responders. Moreover, when IMT personnel arrive at the ICP, field response operations are normally already underway. As IMT personnel assemble, their primary focus should be on getting organized and gaining an understanding of the nature and status of the incident, and addressing the needs of those engaged in field response operations (i.e., the FRT).

Normally, the ICP itself must be set up. This entails setting up the Incident Situation Display and arranging furniture and communications and other equipment to create specific working spaces for the Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections.

Incident Management Team members are likely to come from a variety of organizations (*e.g., company, mutual aid, government agencies, contractors, specialists*) and arrive at different times. It is imperative that these individuals check-in when they arrive at the ICP, report to their Sections, and receive their assignments. In the process:

- Section-specific organization charts should be developed and forwarded to the Resource Unit.
- A Unified Command Structure and integrated response organization should take shape.
- A clear chain-of-command should emerge.
- Everyone should become aware of the Command and General Staff structure.
- Gaps in the organization should be identified and addressed.
- Everyone should become aware of the Crisis Management Team's role, if applicable.

To accelerate the team-building process and improve inter-and intra-Section communications, it is highly recommended that colored vests or some other mechanism be used to help distinguish one Section from another and one responder from another.

4.2.2 Initial Incident Briefing Meeting

An Initial Incident Briefing Meeting should be conducted to inform the IMT on the incident and field response operations. Appendix D contains general information on, and a recommended agenda for, such a meeting.

The meeting should cover the following topics:

- Status of people impacted by and responding to the incident.
- Background information on the incident (*i.e., what happened, when, and where*).
- Nature and status of the source (*i.e., controlled or uncontrolled*).
- Location and status (*i.e., contained or uncontained*) of discharged or emitted materials.
- Results of site characterizations and the locations of Hazard Control Zones.
- The strategy and tactics being implemented by field response personnel and tasks underway.
- Resources deployed to the field response.
- Incident potential (*as known*).
- Field Response Team's incident-specific organizational structure.
- Actions being taken and areas needing attention.
- Help needed.

Ideally, the information cited above should be provided by an individual who has been to the incident scene and has been briefed by field command. When logistics make it impractical, the information will be transmitted to the ICP. The individual should use an ICS 201 Initial Incident Briefing document (*see Appendix E*) to help organize the report. Based on the information provided, the IC should finish the meeting by reviewing the objectives and strategies, and the initial actions that should be taken by IMT members to build upon ongoing field response operations.

4.2.3 Incident Potential

In the mobilization of the IMT, one of the factors that should be considered by the IC is incident potential in order to determine which functions to activate, and to what depth. Incident potential also figures in the formulation of Strategic Objectives. The primary factors evaluated by the IC, either alone or through consultations with the Command and General Staffs, are whether:

- The IMT has the ability to provide adequate medical assistance to those injured by the incident and/or during the conduct of emergency response operations.
- There are significant human resource and/or employee/family assistance issues related to the incident, or the need for a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD).
- Hazards present at the incident scene are likely to grow in intensity.

- There are an adequate number of safety professionals at the incident scene.
- The source is under control or, if not, how long it will take to bring it under control.
- The discharged material is contained or, if not, how long it will take to bring it under control.
- Sensitive environmental, cultural, and/or economic resources are impacted or threatened and, if so, the nature and magnitude of the impacts or threats.
- There are legal issues associated with the incident, including the activation of an Incident Investigation Team.
- The media is present or is likely to want access to the incident scene.
- There is a high level of interest by federal, State, and local government officials.
- There is a significant and potentially prolonged impact to affected and surrounding facilities and operations.
- There are sufficient personnel to staff all shifts through to the end of emergency response operations.
- There are emergency response operations-related financial issues that cannot be dealt with by the IMT.
- There is a likelihood of third-party claims.
- There is a likelihood of Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) surveys and negotiations.
- A security threat exists beyond the routine security issues dealt with by the IMT.

4.2.4 Establishing Objectives

Members of the Command and General Staff should be responsible for the development of Strategic Objectives that clearly define what the IMT/FRT is working to achieve during the conduct of emergency response operations. Based upon the information presented at the Initial Incident Briefing Meeting and the analysis of incident potential, the Incident Commander, Command Staff, and Section Chiefs should have a clear understanding of the major problems that need to be addressed by the IMT/FRT. The Planning Section Chief should be responsible for ensuring the Strategic Objectives define how the IMT/FRT plans to address the problems. Good objectives are specific, measurable, assignable, reasonable, and time related. Strategic Objectives should be written and posted on the Incident Objectives Status Board in the Incident Situation Display. Refer to the inside front cover of this document for generic response objectives.

4.2.5 Incident Situation Display

As information is gathered on the incident and field response operations, IMT members should display it in a prominent location for use in their efforts to maintain command and control over emergency response operations. The place where the information is displayed is referred to as the “Incident Situation Display.”

The Incident Situation Display should be viewed as the one place where anyone can go, at any time, to learn about the nature and status of an incident and emergency response operations. With this in mind, the Incident Situation Display can be set up in two halves. On the left half, the display could contain Status Boards that present information on the incident and factors, such as weather, that may impact the safety, efficiency, or effectiveness of field response operations. Under ICS, this portion of the display is often referred to as Situation Status (SITSTAT).

On the right half, the display could contain Status Boards that depict information on the nature and status of emergency response operations. Under ICS, this portion of the display is often referred to as Resource Status (RESTAT).

In the middle of the Incident Situation Display, a Situation Map should be posted that visually displays the following information:

- Location of source.
- Location of spilled or emitted material.
- Location of incident facilities.
- Rivers, roads, pipelines.
- Location of Branches, Divisions, Groups, Task Forces, Strike Teams, and Single Resources.

A key should accompany the Situation Map. The ICS symbols depicted in Figure 4-1 are examples of symbols that can be used to represent some of the items listed above. Ideally, pre-designed Status Boards should be used to ensure that critical information is captured and presented in a clear and logical fashion. Examples of Status Boards that can be used appear in Appendix F. Moreover, Status Boards should be displayed in an orderly fashion to ensure that they, when viewed together, impart an integrated and coherent message. For a suggested arrangement of Status Boards, see Figure 4-2.

The Incident Situation Display should be established and maintained by the Planning Section (*i.e., the Situation and Resource Units*). It should be situated in a highly visible and easily accessible location, in close proximity to the Planning Section. It should also be easily accessible to the

Operations Section. Since it is an active work area, it should be located away from areas subject to heavy foot traffic.

Although the Incident Situation Display is established and maintained by personnel in the Planning Section, it belongs to all IMT members in the ICP. To the extent the Display contains information about activities underway in other Sections, it is the obligation of appropriate personnel in those Sections to work with Planning to ensure that information posted in the Display is accurate and up-to-date.

Figure 4-1
EXAMPLE OF SYMBOLS THAT MAY BE USED FOR A SITUATION MAP

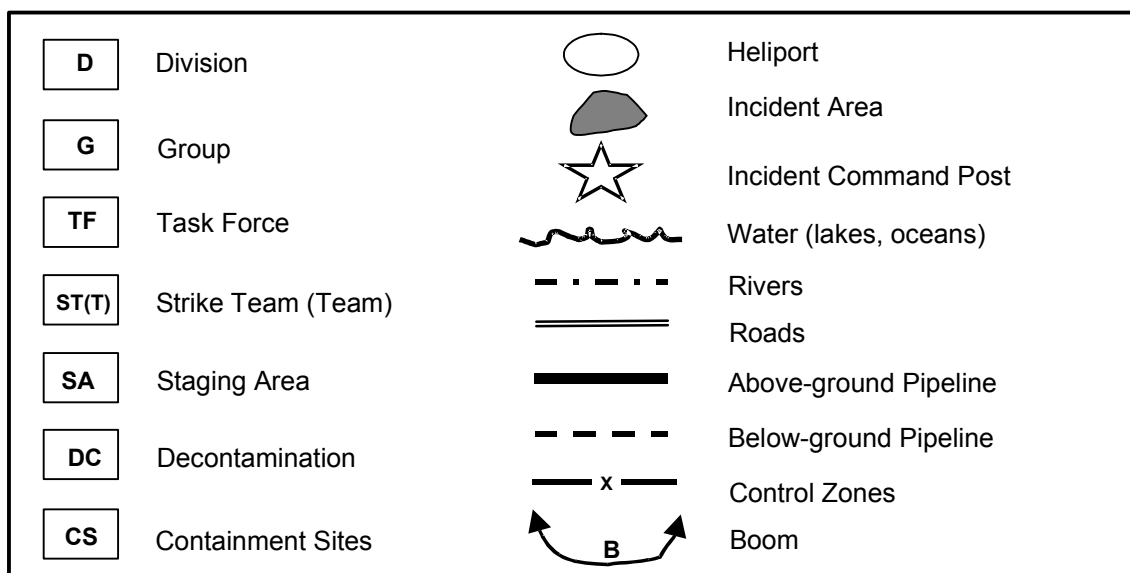
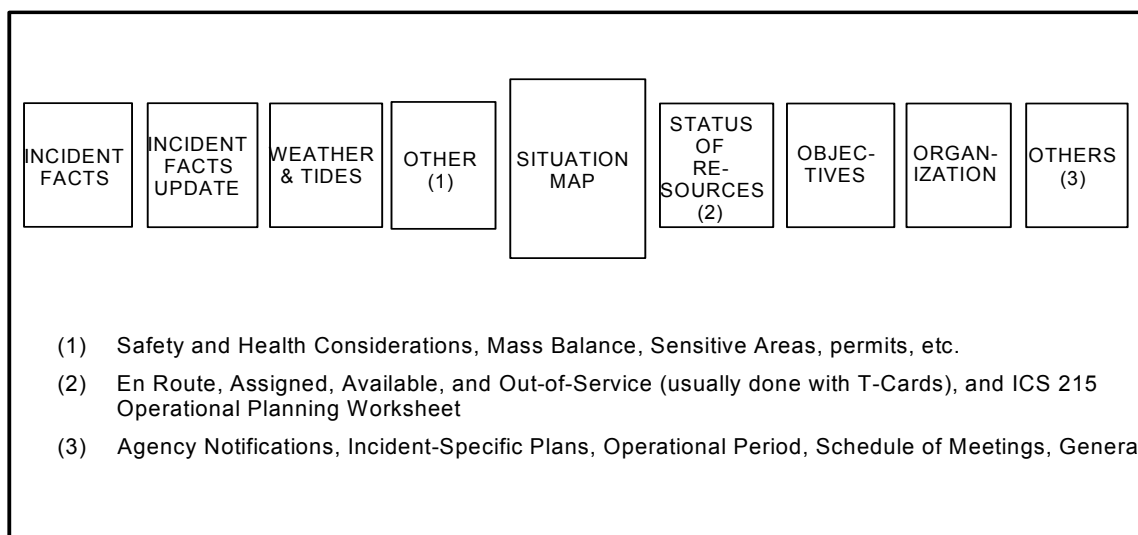


Figure 4-2
EXAMPLE OF INCIDENT SITUATION DISPLAY



4.2.6 Assessment Meetings (Optional for Some Companies)

The Assessment Meeting is designed to keep the IMT focused and informed on field response operations and to ensure they are meeting the needs of the field response activities. These meetings should be highly focused, short in duration, and can be held in conjunction with the standard AIMS Objective, Tactical Operations, Planning, and Shift Briefing Meetings (see *Appendix D*).

While the organization is in a reactive mode and working to maintain command and control, the objectives of any Assessment Meetings conducted are to:

- Keep IMT members focused on the problem.
- Keep IMT members informed about the nature and status of field response operations.
- Keep IMT members focused on Strategic Objectives.
- Identify problems that are impeding acceptable progress.
- Move operations forward as rapidly as possible.
- Identify safety hazards and concerns.

These meetings should be held no more frequently than every hour, depending on the incident, and last no more than 15 to 30 minutes. Attendance at these meetings should be limited to the Unified Command and members of the Command Staff and General Staff, while the balance of the organization continues to work on organizing, managing, and carrying out emergency response operations. Assessment Meetings are best when conducted at the Incident Situation Display in front of the Situation Map and Status Boards. The objectives and a meeting agenda for the Assessment Meeting can be found in Appendix D.

4.3 MAINTAINING COMMAND AND CONTROL

4.3.1 Mechanisms for Maintaining Command and Control

Regardless of the duration of emergency response operations, once command and control is assumed, it must be maintained through to the end of the operations. Maintaining command and control can be viewed as continuing support for and direction to, and synonymous with, ongoing field response operations. Basic command is maintained by having accurate up-to-date information. Collecting, analyzing, and communicating that information to the field assignees will afford one with the best opportunities in maintaining command and control. Support for ongoing operations, in

turn, should be viewed as the number-one priority for the IMT. The IMT does this by:

- Assessing and updating strategies and objectives.
- Continuing to receive periodic Field Reports from field command.
- Maintaining the Incident Situation Display.
- Continuing to hold periodic Assessment Meetings, if appropriate for the incident.

All of the items listed have already been discussed in Section 4.2. Therefore, maintaining command and control can be accomplished, in large measure, by continuing the practices and procedures instituted during the first hours of emergency response operations.

4.3.2 Situation Status Summary Reports

Incidents resulting in the activation of an IMT require detailed information transfer. Ideally, this should be done in a formal, routine fashion through the preparation of Situation Status Summary Reports (*see Appendix E*). These reports should be forwarded to the appropriate personnel as required and should be a retrospective review of what has been accomplished since the last report and to date, in emergency response operations.

4.4 PREPARING INCIDENT ACTION PLANS

4.4.1 Nature and Content of an Incident Action Plan

When emergency response operations last more than one shift, the IMT should be prepared to engage in proactive planning and to develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that defines how field response operations will continue into the next shift(s). The objective of the IAP development process should be to facilitate a seamless transition of emergency response operations from outgoing to incoming response personnel. The period of time covered by an IAP is called the “Next Operational Period” (NOP). The duration of a NOP may vary, but it typically covers 12 or 24 hours. Depending on the response requirements, as long as each operational period utilizes an IAP, the Operational Period can be flexible and last beyond 24 hours. It is important to maintain focus on “who” the audience is and address the issues and concerns necessary to prepare and maintain the operations of the NOP. Only information pertinent to the immediate response efforts should be included in an IAP.

The IAP is prepared and distributed by the Planning Section. The inputs from the Operations Section Chief, field command and agencies are critical

in the preparation of the IAP and the development of objectives and field assignments for the NOP. The Crisis Management Team (CMT) may also have issues it is working on that are pertinent to the development of the IAP.

An Incident Action Plan should be prepared in response to stated objectives and should primarily consist of field assignments designed to address the objectives. An IAP for a NOP must be completed and approved by (Unified) Command before the NOP begins. While an IAP is being implemented, work should be underway on an IAP for the NOP; a cyclical process that should continue until the end of the emergency response. See Appendix D for a typical schedule of events.

4.4.2 Incident Action Plan Development Process

An IAP should be prepared by engaging in a structured planning process. The process should begin with the IAP developers recommending, and (Unified) Command, approving the duration of the NOP (*i.e., when it will begin and end*). Next, those that produce the IAP prepare a forecast or size-up of the situation to the end of the current operational period and identify the factors that will influence the IMT's and field responders' ability to respond during the NOP.

The forecasts should provide the information needed by those that produce the IAP to develop draft objectives for the NOP. Once the objectives are formulated and recorded on the Incident Objectives form (*see Appendix E*), they should be presented to (Unified) Command for review and approval either at the end of the next scheduled Assessment Meeting (*if applicable*) or in a special meeting held with (Unified) Command to go over the objectives and nothing else.

Objectives for the NOP should provide the direction needed for those that produce the IAP to analyze ongoing field response operations and to determine what changes are needed, if any, in ongoing field assignments to fully address the objectives. To assist the process, an Operational Planning Worksheet (*see Appendix E*) should be prepared that lists all tasks currently underway and the major resources assigned to each task. Using the Operational Planning Worksheet, the IAP developers can first identify which tasks should continue into, which will end before, or which will be discontinued during the NOP to address the objectives. The IAP developers must also decide whether a new task(s) should be initiated during the NOP to address the objectives. If so, the new task(s) should be added to the Operational Planning Worksheet.

The objectives for the NOP should also provide the IAP developers guidance on whether a task to be continued into the NOP will continue "as is" in terms of level of intensity (*i.e., as measured by resource allocations*)

or whether the level of intensity will increase or decrease. Once again, the Operational Planning Worksheet helps facilitate this process by allowing the IAP developers to quickly and efficiently record resource allocation decisions.

After decisions are made on tasks and resource allocations for the NOP, the IAP developers should prepare the Field Assignment form (ICS 204 Form) (see *Appendix E*). The Field Assignment forms provide a Task Force Leader and Division/Group Supervisor the specific information needed for the implementation of the assignment during the NOP.

When the field assignments are completed, the IAP developers should determine whether the assignments need further analysis by the Logistics Section, Safety Officer, and/or Environmental Unit Leader. If it is determined that no further analysis is required, then the Field Assignment form for the NOP can be finalized and incorporated into the IAP. Also, during IAP development time, the Logistics Section should:

- Process all IAP-related Resource Order forms (see *Appendix E*) and determine whether requested personnel, equipment, materials, and/or supplies can be delivered by the NOP.
- Process all Resource Transfer/Release forms (see *Appendix E*) and determine whether requested transfers or releases of assigned personnel, equipment, materials, and supplies can be carried out by the NOP.
- Ascertain whether required support services (e.g., *food, water, sanitation, fuel, etc.*) needed to keep personnel and equipment fully operational can be sustained/lined up by the NOP.

Regardless of whether further analyses are required, several hours may be needed to complete all of the forms that should be included in an IAP. Table 4-1 contains a list of recommended forms, their content, and the functions responsible for preparing and updating.

To ensure that Field Assignment forms and work on other IAP documents are concluded in a timely fashion, a deadline should be imposed for the completion of this work.

When an IAP is fully compiled by the IAP developers, it should be presented to (Unified) Command for review and approval. When the IAP has been reviewed and approved by the (Unified) Command, it should be signed by the RP OSC/Incident Commander, SOSC, FOSC and the LOSC (if it is considered appropriate).

**TABLE 4-1
INFORMATION ON INCIDENT ACTION PLAN FORMS**

ICS Form Number	Contents	Responsible Function
ICS 200	“Incident Action Plan (IAP) Cover Page” provides information on forecasted weather and general safety considerations, and a place for approval signatures	Planning Section
ICS 202	Incident Objectives for the NOP	Planning Section
ICS 203/ ICS 207	ICS 203 “Organization Assignment List”, and ICS 207 “Incident Organization Chart” provide information on personnel assignments for the NOP	Resource Unit Leader
ICS 204	“Field Assignment (IAP)” provides information to Task Force Leaders on task-specific safety and environmental considerations, the work to be performed, and assigned resources for the NOP	Planning Section
ICS 205	“Incident Communications Plan” summarizes the Command, Operations, and Support Communications for the NOP	Communications Unit Leader
ICS 206	“Medical Plan” lists the resources available and procedures to be followed to deal with response-related medical emergencies that may occur during the NOP	Medical Unit Leader or IMT Safety Officer
ICS 220	“Air Operations Plan” lists the assignments for the fixed-wing and helicopter resources available to response operations during the NOP	Air Operations Branch Director
ICS 224	“Environmental Unit Summary” provides a forecast of initiatives to be taken in the following areas: wildlife, permits, waste management, and other environmental matters	Environmental Unit Leader

4.4.3 Incident Action Plan Implementation

Once an IAP is approved, implementation should begin. The plan should be forwarded to the field command for distribution to field responders and reviewed with IMT members during shift-change/hand-over meetings (see *Appendix D for information on, and a recommended agenda for, a Shift Briefing Meeting*). In addition, the Situation Map and status boards in the Incident Situation Display should be updated immediately before the beginning of the NOP to reflect the contents of the plan.

OPTIONAL RECOMMENDATION: To ensure the planning efforts do not interfere with the IMT's ability to support ongoing field response operations, an option may be to form an Incident Action Plan/General Plan (IAP/GP) Unit to work on the IAP while the balance of the IMT continues to focus on the response. This IAP/GP Unit should be led by a representative of the Planning Section who serves as the IAP/GP Unit Leader. The unit should include, whenever possible, other personnel from the Planning Section and at least one representative each from the Operations and Logistics Sections. The unit's composition also should reflect the makeup of the Unified Command by including representatives from the responding organizations.

4.5 PREPARING THE GENERAL PLAN

4.5.1 Nature and Content of General Plan

Incidents that require emergency response operations for more than a couple of days tend to be complex, resource-intensive, and costly in nature. A lengthy response effort could require the preparation of a rough order of magnitude project plan called a General Plan. Like an IAP, a General Plan should be prepared to address objectives approved by (Unified) Command. These objectives are often expressed as milestones (*i.e., time frames for the completion of all and/or portions of incident response operations*). A General Plan should identify the major tasks that are being, or will need to be, carried out through to the end of emergency response operations, the duration of the tasks, and the major equipment and personnel resources needed to accomplish the tasks within the specified duration. Agencies and the CMT may also be working issues that would be incorporated into the development of the General Plan.

The Planning Section must facilitate preparation of a General Plan concurrently with its efforts to sustain ongoing emergency response operations and to prepare an Incident Action Plan. The IAP/GP Unit mentioned above may be used as an option to develop the General Plan.

4.5.2 General Plan Development Process

Information for the General Plan can be generated by reviewing the Situation Map and status boards posted in the Incident Situation Display, and the contents of Incident Action Plans.

Similar to an IAP, a General Plan should be based on a forecast of the situation -- a forecast that extends to the completion of emergency response operations rather than the end of the NOP.

When the Planning Section has analyzed the forecast of the situation, it then performs a detailed incident assessment. During the assessment, the Planning Section should use the forecast to estimate the extent of the area that could be impacted by the incident and to quantify the magnitude or severity of the projected impacts. After this, the area should be studied to determine its attributes and to analyze how the discharged or emitted materials may affect the attributes and/or how they may affect emergency response operations. This study can be based on maps and other visual or written information about the area, discussions with people familiar with the area, an inspection of the area by all or a portion of the team, or a combination of the three. The purpose of the study is to gain an appreciation of the tasks, major equipment and personnel resources, and time needed to address the incident throughout the studied area.

For a complex response, it may be difficult to project resource and time requirements for all of the tasks to be covered by the plan until “driver” tasks are identified and addressed. Driver tasks are those that can be used to define not only the overall duration of the project, but the duration of major phases within the project. Also, driver tasks have a tendency to be the most resource-intensive.

When the driver tasks are fully defined, the Planning Section may elect to meet with (Unified) Command to brief them on progress and to obtain concurrence on the nature, duration, and resource requirements of the driver tasks.

Once the driver tasks are identified and scoped in terms of their duration and major resource requirements, it should be easy to scope the duration of, and to estimate major resource requirements for, all of the other tasks to be covered by the General Plan. During the scoping process on the balance of the tasks, the team can meet with subject matter experts to obtain their input in the projection process.

When all the tasks are fully defined, the information should be compiled by the Planning Section into a single, comprehensive version of the General Plan and presented to (Unified) Command for review and approval.

4.5.3 General Plan Implementation

After the General Plan is approved, it must be implemented on a day-to-day basis to the end of emergency response operations. The plan is implemented by using it as the basis for all subsequent Incident Action Plans, and by updating the plan daily.

The General Plan should be updated at the end of each day. Projected durations for each task should be checked against actual progress being made to determine whether work is on, ahead of, or behind schedule. Also, projected resource requirements should be reconciled with actual resource utilization.

End of Section 4