

5.0 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: CMT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

NOTE: The following discussion on a Crisis Management Team (CMT) is provided as a general guideline of overall management concepts and principles for employing a CMT. The guidelines are not prescriptive in nature and each organization may opt to manage and operate their CMT in a different manner.

Some organizations have instituted a CMT in their incident management system. The CMT is the highest level of the incident response hierarchy supporting the IMT and is mobilized when an incident could potentially escalate into a crisis situation. The upper support structure for the Coast Guard is defined in the Coast Guard's Incident Management Handbook.

The CMT is led by a Crisis Manager. The remaining membership of the CMT may be comprised, as needed, of key advisors from Safety, Public Information, Legal, Human Resources, Finance, Technical, administrative support, etc.

The roles of the CMT can include:

- Identify, evaluate, and proactively address the crisis implications of the incident.
 - Avoid allowing an incident to escalate to a crisis situation, whenever possible.
 - Mitigate crisis situations that cannot be avoided to the maximum extent possible.
- Support the IMT.
- Provide overall strategic direction during a crisis situation.
- Serve as primary contact for upper levels of the organization.
- Protect the organization's operability, viability, and credibility.

5.2 NOTIFICATION OF THE CMT

Incidents that require activation of the FRT are normally reported to the parent organization. Specific reporting requirements vary within different organizations. The IMT's ability to provide a report in a timely fashion can be facilitated through the use of the ICS Form 201 Initial Incident Briefing document (see *Appendix E*). This form is routinely filled out by or on behalf of the field command and/or the IMT Incident Commander, and contains the information needed by the CMT.

5.3 NOTIFICATION OF THE CRISIS MANAGER

When the parent organization receives notification of an incident, the Crisis Manager should be rapidly notified and provided with the name and telephone number of the IMT contact person. The Crisis Manager should call the contact person as quickly as possible, receive a briefing, and use the information provided by the contact person to quickly assess the situation, and decide on the most appropriate course of action. If the incident in question is minor in nature, requires no assistance from the CMT, and poses little, if any, threat to escalate to crises, the Crisis Manager can elect to simply monitor the situation.

5.4 MOBILIZING THE CMT

Should the incident dictate mobilizing the CMT, the Crisis Manager ensures that the crisis response effort is staffed with sufficient personnel to meet Crisis Objectives. Reasonable work schedules through personnel replacement and shift rotation should be provided for. Ramp-up is the process of rapidly building a work force capable of meeting Crisis Objectives and sustaining crisis response operations at a level demanded by the incident.

If a decision is made to mobilize the CMT, the Crisis Manager should ensure that:

- CMT members are contacted and provided with information on the location of, and their reporting time to, the crisis center.

- Senior management is contacted and kept informed and updated on the situation.
- The CMT Administrative Assistant is contacted and directed to activate the crisis center.
- The IMT is kept informed about all decisions and actions.

During mobilization, CMT members should:

- Respond immediately to confirm availability/non-availability.
- If unavailable, identify and mobilize a suitable alternate.
- Delegate day-to-day responsibilities as appropriate.
- Gather materials needed to carry out CMT responsibilities.
- Report to their crisis center.

5.5 CRISIS CENTER ACTIVATION

Upon notification of a decision to activate a crisis center, the CMT Administrative Assistant should, as appropriate:

- Institute security procedures.
- Arrange for necessary security clearances for CMT members.
- Institute CMT check-in/check-out procedures.
- Set up the center, including: clearing the room of non-essential materials; arranging the meeting table; distributing nameplates, CMT member notebooks and supplies; posting CMT Incident Situation Display status boards; checking telephones and fax machines to ensure they are operational.

5.6 IMT/CMT COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

5.6.1 Initial Crisis Manager/Incident Commander Contact

Whenever possible, the Crisis Manager should talk, via telephone, with the Incident Commander prior to the CMT Initial Incident Briefing Meeting. The purpose of the conversation should be to:

- Confirm the status of team activations.
- Review the nature and status of the incident and emergency response operations.
- Discuss incident potential.

- Discuss Strategic Objectives.
- Define CMT information needs.
- Define IMT requests for assistance from the CMT.
- Establish the crisis network

The conversation should end with an agreement on the timing of the next conversation.

5.6.2 Crisis Communications/Network

During the initial telephone conversation described above, the Crisis Manager (*or their designee*) provides a telephone number that is dedicated to receiving calls from the Incident Commander (*or their designee*). The Incident Commander, in turn, provides a telephone number that is dedicated to receiving calls from the Crisis Manager. By doing so, they define a crisis network, and assure that important communications can be transmitted between the IMT and CMT quickly and efficiently throughout the duration of the incident.

5.6.3 Routine Communications Protocol: Crisis Manager to/from Incident Commander

The Crisis communications protocol defines who will speak to whom, about what, how, and when. Over time, the protocol grows to encompass all verbal and electronic transactions between the CMT and IMT. Initially, however, the protocol focuses on what the Crisis Manager and the Incident Commander (*or their designees*) will talk about, how, and when.

Under the crisis communications protocol, the Incident Commander routinely provides (*directly or indirectly*) the following information to the Crisis Manager:

- Nature and status of the incident.
- Nature and status of incident response operations.
- Nature and severity of impacts on or threats to people, the environment, and property.
- Nature and tenor of relations with other IMTs/CMTs, government agencies, stakeholders, the public, and the media.
- Incident potential.
- Strategic Objectives and response priorities.
- Status of work on CMT Issues and Concerns.
- IMT Requests for Assistance.

In return, the Crisis Manager should routinely provide (*directly or indirectly*) the following information to the Incident Commander:

- Status of CMT work on IMT Requests for Assistance.
- Crisis Objectives.
- CMT Issues and Concerns that need to be worked by the IMT.
- CMT Requests for Information.

Routine communications protocol between the Crisis Manager and the Incident Commander (*or their designees*) should be established during their initial conversation.

5.6.4 Communications Protocol: CMT Members to/from IMT Members

The crisis communications protocol should be designed to ensure that CMT support of the IMT is provided in a way that does not undermine the authority of the Incident Commander or the effectiveness and efficiency of incident response operations. The protocol also should ensure that the Incident Commander and the IMT are not overwhelmed by communiqués from the CMT. Under the protocol, the Crisis Manager (*or designee*) should serve as the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the CMT and the Incident Commander (*or designee*) should serve as the SPOC for the IMT.

In a complex incident requiring a high level of CMT involvement, it may be impractical for all CMT/IMT verbal communications to be handled by the SPOCs. Under such circumstances, CMT/IMT function-to-function contacts may be appropriate providing such contacts are authorized by the SPOCs. In addition, it may be desirable for the Crisis Manager/Incident Commander to state that the preferred approach is for function-to-function contacts to be initiated by the IMT members. To facilitate function-to-function contacts, the CMT Administrative Assistant and the appropriate IMT member should exchange lists of CMT/IMT members and contact phone numbers.

5.6.5 Communications “Tools”

To help facilitate the rapid compilation and communication of information between the IMT and CMT, the following forms can be used:

- ICS 201 Initial Incident Briefing document.
- Situation Status Summary Report.

Another “tool” the CMT can use is for the CMT to listen to, but not participate in, IMT Meetings via a conference telephone. Any CMT member questions or issues that arise as they listen to the meeting are noted and passed on to the Crisis Manager (*or designee*) so they can be

raised during Crisis Manager/Incident Commander telephone conversations that should take place after the conclusion of IMT Meetings.

5.7 INITIAL CMT BRIEFING

The Initial CMT Briefing should be conducted as soon as possible after the Crisis Manager has been briefed by the Incident Commander and the CMT has arrived at the crisis center. The objective of the meeting should be to ensure the rapid and full involvement of all activated CMT members in addressing the needs of FRT/IMT response personnel, and in analyzing and addressing the crisis implications of the incident and/or incident response operations.

In conducting the meeting, the Crisis Manager should be prepared to provide the CMT with the following information:

- The nature, location, and status of the incident.
- The nature and status of incident response operations.
- The FRT/IMT's assessment of the severity of the situation and its crisis potential.
- The status of contacts with upper management.
- Any requests for help received from the IMT, and the status of efforts to provide the help.
- Whether the appropriate government agencies have been notified, and the nature and status of their involvement in incident response operations.
- Whether the media has been contacted, and the nature and status of media inquiries.
- The nature and status of any other actions taken.

The Crisis Manager then assigns action items and requests for assistance from the IMT to appropriate CMT members.

5.8 INTER-CMT COMMUNICATIONS

If other organizations responding to an incident activate a CMT, the Crisis Managers should attempt to establish a direct line of communications with their counterpart(s). A protocol should then be agreed upon that defines what the Crisis Managers will talk about, when, and how.

5.9 CRISIS CENTER INCIDENT SITUATION DISPLAY

Information that is gathered from the IMT as well as information generated by the CMT should be displayed in the crisis center. This information should be displayed prominently for use by all CMT members at the crisis center Incident Situation Display. The Incident Situation Display should be viewed as the one place in the crisis center where anyone can go, at any time, to learn about the nature and status of an incident and incident response operations, and the nature and status of the CMT's response efforts.

One of the primary purposes of the crisis center Incident Situation Display is to assist the CMT in establishing and maintaining crisis response efforts. With this in mind, the crisis center Incident Situation Display could contain up to three sections. The first two sections could contain a Situation Map and Status Boards generated by the IMT. These sections present information on the incident and factors, such as weather, that may impact upon the safety, efficiency, or effectiveness of FRT/IMT response operations, and depict information on the nature and status of field response operations.

The third section could contain Status Boards that pertain specifically to the work of the CMT. Specifically, the crisis center Incident Situation Display Status Boards could include:

- Incident Facts
- CMT organizational chart
- CMT Sign-In Status Board
- Nature and Effects of Incident Status Board
- CMT Issues/Impacts Status Board
- Help Requested by IMT Status Board
- CMT Tasks/Priorities Status Board
- CMT Action Plan Status Board
- Schedule of IMT/CMT Meetings Status Board

- Action Items from CMT Meetings

The crisis center Incident Situation Display could be established and maintained by the CMT Administrative Assistant. Although the Incident Situation Display may be established and maintained by the Administrative Assistant, it belongs to all CMT personnel. It is the obligation of all CMT members to ensure that information pertaining to their respective activities is accurately posted and up-to-date.

5.10 ISSUE IDENTIFICATION MEETINGS

CMT Meetings should be held at a frequency to be determined by the Crisis Manager and the CMT members. The objective of Issue Identification Meetings should be the identification of issues and concerns, and the development of actions to address the issues and concerns.

To the maximum extent possible, CMT Meetings should be scheduled to follow the IMT Meetings (*see Appendix D*). This would allow the CMT to benefit from having access to the latest information available on the incident and tactical response operations. Information on the timing of IMT Meetings should be available from a copy of the IMT's Operational Period/Schedule of Meetings Status Board.

5.11 CMT ACTION PLAN

The product of the CMT's work and deliberations could be a written CMT Action Plan or other method of documenting planned actions. This document could list:

- Crisis Objectives.
- CMT organizational assignments.
- Issues and concerns raised by CMT members.
- IMT Requests for Assistance.
- Agreed-upon actions to be taken to address the issues and concerns and IMT Requests for Assistance.
- The names of the CMT members responsible for ensuring that the actions are carried out in a timely fashion.

The plan itself could be a stand-alone document that is constantly updated as new issues/actions are identified, and work progresses on the actions. In addition, the crisis center Incident Situation Display contains a Status Board (see *Appendix F*) that can be used to summarize the Action Plan.

At some point in the CMT's deliberations, time should be devoted to the identification of work to be performed by the next shift (*if 24-hour operations are necessary*). Each function should be required to identify action items to be addressed during the next shift.

To the extent that the actions listed in the plan involve, or have an impact upon, IMT and/or FRT personnel, the plan should be forwarded to the Incident Commander.

5.12 LONG TERM PLAN

Crisis response operations may have to be carried out for an extended period of time. When this is the case, the Crisis Manager may activate the Long Term Planner to develop a Long Term Plan. The purpose of the Long Term Plan will be to clearly define the tasks the CMT intends to engage in during, and the resources and time the CMT intends to devote to, crisis response operations until their successful conclusion.

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