**Hazardous Materials: Managing the Incident, Fourth Edition**

**Chapter 3: Managing the Incident: Problems, Pitfalls, Solutions**

**Chief Concepts**

* The successful management of a hazmat incident is directly linked to the rapid development of an effective incident management process and organization. From the arrival of the first emergency responder, the IC must match and balance the size and structure of the ICS organization with the number of units and organizations present on the incident scene. A functional hazmat command system must allow the IC to use the standard ICS elements to establish and maintain control, to be responsive to the unique hazards and risks of each incident, and, finally, to apply the same ICS system and process to every incident, regardless of its nature and size.
* A variety of different players will respond to a working hazmat incident. Therefore, what occurs during the planning and preparedness phase will establish the framework for how the emergency response effort will operate.
* There is no single organization that can effectively manage a major hazmat incident. Organizations that attempt to maintain their usual structure or bureaucracy while managing a major event will have inherent problems in implementing a timely and effective emergency response.
* Emergency response programs can be categorized as being either “people-dependent” or “system-dependent.” Special operations teams are often very people- dependent when they are initially formed. These organizations rely on the experience of a few key individuals and can result in failed emergency response efforts if these key individuals are not present at an incident.
* If ICS is not used for all routine emergencies, don’t expect the ICS structure to function and adapt effectively and safely when a major emergency occurs. The routine establishes the foundation on which the non-routine must build. The more routine decisions made prior to a major emergency, the more time the IC will have to make the critical decisions during the emergency.
* The Hazardous Materials Group is normally under the command of a senior Hazmat Officer (often known as the Hazardous Materials Group Supervisor), who, in turn, reports to the Operations Section Chief or the IC. The Hazardous Materials Group is directly responsible for all tactical hazmat operations that occur in the hot and warm zones of an incident.
* The Hazardous Materials Group Supervisor is responsible for the management and coordination of all functional responsibilities assigned to the Hazardous Materials Group, including safety, site control, research, entry, and decontamination.
* The ASO/Hazardous Materials is responsible for coordinating safety activities within the Hazardous Materials Group but also has certain responsibilities that may require action without initially contacting the normal chain of command. The ISO is responsible for the safety of all personnel operating at the incident, while the ASO/Hazardous Materials is responsible for all operations within the Hazardous Materials Group and within the hot and warm zones. This includes having the authority to stop or prevent unsafe actions and procedures during the course of the incident.
* Your emergency response performance will be evaluated on two interrelated factors: (1) the implementation of a timely, well-trained and equipped emergency response effort in the field, and (2) the effective management of the interpersonal, organizational, and external impacts created by the incident. An effective response effort can be compromised or completely negated by poor management of the political and external issues.