

Incident Management Terminology Guide

Incident Complexity

Definition	The level of difficulty, severity, or overall resistance faced by incident management or support personnel while trying to manage or support an incident to a successful conclusion or to manage one type of incident or event compared to another type. These are ranked from 1 (The worst) to 5 (The best) .
Example	A forest fire can become complex if it spreads rapidly, affects multiple areas, and requires coordination between agencies. The higher the complexity, the more challenging the incident.
Real World Example	The 2010 Haiti earthquake is a prime example of incident complexity. When a devastating earthquake struck Haiti, it created a multifaceted crisis. The incident complexity arose from the need for immediate humanitarian assistance, search and rescue operations, healthcare provision for the injured, managing displaced populations, coordinating international aid efforts, addressing security concerns, and rebuilding critical infrastructure. The combination of these factors made the earthquake response and recovery efforts exceptionally complex for both local and international agencies.

Complex Incident

Definition	A single incident that becomes complicated due to various factors i.e. multijurisdictional, communication problems, inexperience, or extended duration.
Example	Consider a house fire that spreads to nearby houses due to strong winds and limited resources for firefighters on a day when the heat index is near 100 degrees.
Real World Example	The 2019 Notre-Dame de Paris fire in France serves as a real-world example of a complex incident. Initially, it was a fire incident at the iconic cathedral. However, it became complex due to factors such as the historical and cultural significance of the building, the need to protect valuable artifacts, and the challenges posed by the cathedral's structural integrity.

Incident Complex

Definition	Two or more individual incidents located in the same general area and assigned to a single Incident Commander or Unified Command.
Example 1	Imagine a chemical spill on a highway causing a traffic jam. While responders are addressing the spill, a tanker truck experiences a mechanical failure causing a collision that happens nearby with multiple injuries, all within the same timeframe and general location.
Real World Example	The Rodeo-Chediski Fire was a massive wildfire in eastern Arizona, USA, in 2002. It became an incident complex as the Rodeo Fire and Chediski Fires merged, causing a rapidly evolving and complex situation for responders. The fire initially started as two separate blazes, but due to strong winds and dry conditions, they converged into one massive wildfire. This incident complex involved evacuations, coordination among various firefighting agencies, and addressing the needs of multiple affected communities simultaneously.

Incident Effect Indicators Summary Table

Incident Complexity Level: Incident Effect Indicators Summary										
Type	Resistance to stabilization or mitigation	How long does it take for resources to meet incident objectives?	Effects on population immediately surrounding the incident	Length of incident effects	Evacuations necessary during mitigation	Adverse impact on CIKR	CIKR impact / mitigation measures	Coordination required with elected/ governing officials and stakeholder groups	Do conditions or actions that caused original incident persist?	Probability of cascading event or exacerbation of current incident
5	None	1-2 hours	Minimal	Minimal	Few or none	None	None	Minimal or none	No	None
4	Low	Several to 24 hours	Limited	Up to 24 hours	Few or none	Minimal	Uncomplicated within one operational period	Minimal or none	No	Low to none
3	Moderate	At least 24 hours	Moderate	Several days to over one week	Possible; may require shelter	Threatens, damages, or destroys property	Adverse; multiple operational periods	Some	Possibly	Medium
2	High	Several days	Significant	Several days to two weeks	Possible; may require shelter/ housing for several days to months	Threatens, damages, or destroys property	Destructive; requires coordination over multiple operational periods	Moderate, including political organizations	Possibly	High
1	High	Numerous operational periods	Significant	Two weeks to over a month	May require shelter/ housing for several days to months	Significantly threatens, damages, or destroys property	Highly destructive; requires long-term planning and extensive coordination over multiple operational periods	High, including political organizations	Yes	High