ICS in Action:
Using the Incident Command System
in Public Health Outbreak Investigations

Program Overview

Program Objectives

At the end of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Describe how ICS can benefit disease outbreak investigations undertaken by local public health department staff.

2. Use appropriate ICS terminology to describe the roles and tasks that public health staff assume in an outbreak investigation.

3. Give examples of the ICS steps taken in outbreak investigations.

4. *For a hypothetical disease outbreak*: Demonstrate the ability to develop an Incident Action Plan, carry out an operational briefing, and formulate positions and an organizational chart for how an outbreak response might be organized.

Audience

This training is intended for staff at small to medium-sized rural local health departments, but may also be useful for staff at larger health departments. The training may be particularly useful for organizational units that are responsible for investigation and management of disease outbreaks (e.g., epidemiology teams, epidemiology rapid response teams, outbreak investigation teams).

Format

ICS in Action is a video (DVD) with an accompanying Participant Workbook that includes presentation slides, 7 participant activities, a program evaluation, and 3 appendices of supplemental training documents. In addition, the *ICS in Action* Web page (http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action) contains links to online training and technical assistance resources and downloadable workbook files for printing.

Course Delivery

This training can be implemented in 2 ways:

1. **Small group training session** (*recommended approach*) facilitated by a training coordinator or other staff person in face-to-face training sessions with up to 20 people. (Note: The facilitator does NOT have to have previous ICS experience in an actual incident. See the **Facilitator's Guide** for more information.)

2. **Self-paced training** when small group training is not available or if self-paced instruction is preferred.

ICS in Action is presented in 2 modules to enable flexible delivery of the training to meet learners' needs and schedules. The training may be conducted in a single session or 2 shorter sessions

- **Introduction: Program Overview**

  Duration approximately 10 minutes

- **Module One: ICS for Public Health –** Provides a review of the core concepts of ICS in public health followed by an example of ICS as it was used by local health departments during an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness in a rural area

  Duration approximately 60 minutes

- **Module Two: ICS: A Public Health Case Study** – Walks through a case study scenario using ICS during a hypothetical disease outbreak investigation

  Duration approximately 80 minutes

Course Materials and Equipment

The materials and resources associated with this training package are:

1. **DVD player and TV monitor *OR* computer with DVD drive and speakers** (and LCD projector if using with group). *Be sure that you have adequate speakers to project the audio – computer or TV speakers are not sufficient for training a large group!*

2. **Computer with Internet access** to download and print the Participant Workbook and Facilitator's Guide documents from the *ICS in Action* Web page (http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action). A photocopier may be necessary to make a copy of the Workbook for each participant.

3. **Training Program Video** can be ordered on DVD by emailing nccphp@unc.edu or calling 919-843-5561. *Duplicates of the DVD may be made for nonprofit educational purposes and only with written permission from the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness.*

4. **Participant Workbook** with copies of presentation slides, 7 self-paced and small group learning activities with instructions, and a program evaluation.

5. **Facilitator's Guide** with information on how to plan and conduct this training.

6. **Web Page** with additional ICS resources for further study (visit http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action)

Continuing Education Units

CEUs from the University of North Carolina are not currently offered for completion of the *ICS in Action* training. Please visit the NCCPHP Web site for updated information.

Comments and Feedback

Please send your reactions, suggestions and evaluation results to the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness. We appreciate your feedback.

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Facilitator's Guide

Here are the basic steps to prepare and conduct the training program *ICS in Action: Using the Incident Command System in Public Health Outbreak Investigations*.

a) **Understand your role**
b) **Get comfortable with the training materials**
c) **Review the training delivery options**
d) **Assess the audience you want to train**
e) **Plan the training logistics**
f) **Prepare the training materials**
g) **Conduct the training session**
h) **Evaluate and follow-up on the training session**

a) **Understand your role** – As the facilitator of this training program, you are <u>not</u> expected to have experience in using ICS during a public health incident or experience in outbreak investigation. Your role is to conduct the training using the resources provided, including these guidelines to help you prepare to be the facilitator. The value you bring as a facilitator is to understand your audiences and provide the context for this training to make it relevant and appropriate.

b) **Get comfortable with the training materials** – As the facilitator of this session, it is important for you to become familiar with the training materials before your conduct the training. The training materials include:

1. **Training Program Video** with slides and audio narration on DVD

2. **Participant Workbook** with presentation slides and activities

3. **Web Page** with additional resources for using in ICS in public health settings

This training can be used as a small group training program as well as for independent study. The ideal class size is 5-20 participants. This program can be delivered in 2 separate sessions or as a single session.

To become familiar with this training, you should review each of the course components, following the instructions for self-paced learning. At the beginning of each module in the **Workbook**, you will find learning objectives for each module. Pay special attention to the facilitation instructions for activities, and review the directions for small group training provided at the beginning of each activity. Review the answer key found at the end of the activity so you can be familiar with the correct responses.

It is also suggested that you review the resources posted on the NCCPHP Web site so that you can help make recommendations for additional training. The training resources are available at http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action. You may want to identify local or state resources for ICS expertise so you can contact these individuals or agencies if needed.

c) **Review the training delivery options** – This program can be delivered to groups in several different ways depending on the needs of your audience:

1. A single program – Cover all the training content and learning activities in a single 2.5-hour session

2. Two short sessions – If a single session is not feasible, you can conduct this as 2 sessions, with the first session (Introduction and Module One) lasting about 1 hour and the second session (Module 2) lasting about 1.5 hours.

d) **Assess the audience you want to train** – Before you move ahead with implementing this training in your public health agency, think carefully about the characteristics of the people you want to train before your decide on exactly how to conduct the training. Your role as facilitator is to understand your audiences and provide the context for this training to make it relevant and appropriate.

- The intended audience for this training is staff at small to medium-sized rural local health departments who have received basic ICS training (ICS 100, 200, and 700) but have little or no experience implementing ICS within their agency. The training may also be useful for staff at larger health departments or for those health department staff who are more familiar with ICS but would like additional training.

- The training may be particularly useful for those organizational units responsible for investigation and management of disease outbreaks (e.g., epidemiology teams, epidemiology rapid response teams, outbreak investigation teams).

- The prerequisites for this training are completion of ICS trainings 100, 200, and 700 and training or experience in disease outbreak investigation. In addition, completion of ICS 300 is strongly recommended for persons who might serve as Command or General Staff.

Identify your "target" audience and conduct a brief needs assessment to confirm your assumptions including:

- What are the skills and experience of your audience related to the use of ICS in public health settings? Does the audience have the prerequisite ICS trainings and outbreak investigation experience?

- Does your audience perceive a need for this training in their current work and/or express an interest in the topic?

- How much time does your audience have to dedicate to this training?

- Do the managers of your audience support their attendance at this training and their implementation of the skills back on the job?

- Are there travel constraints or other logistics that you need to consider?

Based on the answers to these questions, *decide how to conduct this training* including:

- Whether to conduct this training in 1 session, 2 consecutive sessions, or a self-guided independent training.

- When and where to schedule the training to be most convenient for your audience.

- How many people you need to train and what size group you are comfortable facilitating.

- How to tailor the agenda to your audience's needs (e.g., how much time to allow for each activity).

- How to invite your participants to gain their participation (e.g., clarify why the training is important for their jobs and if their managers support their participation)

e) **Plan the training logistics** – This includes the "nuts and bolts" of getting your training scheduled and ready to implement once you have decided how to conduct the training.

- Determine possible dates that you and your audience are available for training.

- Secure a training facility for the dates and size of your audience that meets your requirements (number and set-up of tables and chairs, TV, etc.). Consider accessibility and convenience for your audience.

- Invite your potential audience, including information such as the topic, date/time, location, registration deadline, overview of goals and reasons the audience may want to attend, cost, etc.

- Confirm your participants and create an attendance roster.

- Obtain the equipment that you need to deliver the presentation: TV with DVD player or other set-up with adequate speakers. Have a back-up plan in case you experience a problem with this equipment (e.g., technical support person).

- Decide if refreshments are needed and arrange for appropriate amounts.

- Consider if others are needed to assist with room set-up, registering participants, refreshments, and other logistics.

- Prepare a back-up plan in case of illness or bad weather and communicate this plan.

f) Prepare the training materials – The **Participant Workbook** (with presentation slides, activities, and evaluation) can be found at http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action. Download the **Workbook** materials to your computer, then print them and make copies for your participants. We suggest making double-sided copies of the **Workbook** and putting them in a 3-ring binder.

You may decide not to distribute the entire **Participant Workbook** during the training, but to just provide copies of the activities and the evaluation. The workbook could be available after the training as a refresher. Again, part of the facilitator's job is to understand the audience and determine what will be most effective.

g) Conduct the training session – We will review a few essentials for delivering an effective training program. However, this Facilitator's Guide is not a complete "how to" for facilitating an effective session or for responding to in-depth questions about use of ICS.

- Have everything set up and ready to go before the session so you can greet people as they enter the room (test the equipment well in advance to have time to address problems).

- Start with a persuasive introduction to let your audience know why this topic is important and how it relates to their jobs and lives. If the group doesn't know each other, be sure to have everyone introduce themselves.

- Introduce *each segment of the video* and *each activity* with strong, clear statement of purpose or context to help the audience understand the purpose of the content or activity and "WIIFM" (What's in it for me?).

- Manage discussion effectively by encouraging everyone to participate (and no one to dominate). Keep focused on your goals and make sure your audience gets the connection between what you are doing in the activity and why it is important.

- Build in brief "check-in" times to gauge how the session is going. This doesn't mean just asking, "Are there any questions?" It is better to ask more specific questions to elicit information, such as "How do you see this relating to what you do on the job?" If you need to spend more time on an activity than you had planned, remember it is better to meet the needs of a majority of the learners than to satisfy your desire to cover all the content. Take a 3 minute "stretch break" if you need to reconsider how to proceed.

- Maintain control of the time. If you are going over your expected timeframes, figure out how to adjust the content (e.g., ask participants to complete an activity after the program on their own time). Don't extend the training session unless you get everyone's agreement to end the session later.

- Be sure to be familiar with the Activity Answer Keys and have them available for reference as questions arise. Encourage participants to come up with their own answers before referring to an Answer Key.

- In case your participants raise in-depth questions or issues that are not covered in these materials, be sure that you know local or state personnel experienced in use of ICS that you can call on (the online resource guide has suggestions).

h) **Evaluate and follow-up on the training session** – The evaluation form included in the **Workbook** is administered at the end of the training program and measures how satisfied the participants were with the session. This evaluation allows you to collect feedback from the group and can be helpful if you plan to conduct the training again. Be sure to thank participants for completing the evaluation.

Follow-up Activities that you might consider with your audience after the training session help you assess longer-term results in terms of learning, skill application, and overall value of and satisfaction with the training. For example, you could contact participants in 2 months to see how many people had followed through on their action plans and taken additional online training or reviewed technical assistance documents. You could recognize the people who completed their action plans and ask them to share what they learned with others.