Natural Hazards Center

University of Colorado at Boulder

Collaborations for Emergency Management and Disaster Response: a U. S. Perspective

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Greetings from Colorado!

Presentation Themes

- Characteristics of the U. S. governmental context that influence emergency management systems

- Institutional arrangements and programs that are intended to facilitate collaboration

- Contradictions, dilemmas, and issues created by these arrangements

Disaster Management Collaborations

Key Influences on Emergency Management System

- Vast geographic size of the country

- Vulnerability to multiple hazards: floods, flash floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, nuclear and technological hazards etc.

Key Influences on Emergency Management System

- Federal system of governance: "shared powers" among federal, state, local governmental levels

- History of setting policy "reactively," in response to major disaster events, e.g., the September 11 terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina

- "Downsizing" of government: privatization, outsourcing, contracting, etc.

- Recent recognition of the limits of government

Collaborative Management

"The traditional 'cavalry' role of government—rushing in to save the day—has given way to a more collaborative and cooperative set of relationships among networks of public, private, and nonprofit organizations."

–William L. Waugh
In *Emergency Management: Principles and Practice for Local Government*

The "Collaboration Imperative"

"We fully recognize that a government-centric approach to disaster management will not be enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident. That is why we must fully engage our entire societal capacity, leveraging trade associations, non-governmental organizations – including those that represent different linguistic and ethnic minority groups, faith-based organizations, private industry, and social and fraternal organizations. These are the organizations that provide the bulk of services to communities every day, and to the extent that they are able, they should continue to be the primary provider of such services in a disaster.

-Testimony of Craig Fugate, Administrator of FEMA before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee March, 2011

Nationwide: The National Response Framework, which specifies that disaster response begins first with the local level, then the state level, and finally the federal or national-level government, in support of other governmental levels

Federal government coordinates its operations through offices in ten geographic regions

At each level of government: Formal multi-agency disaster response plans

Among levels of government: Statutes, authorities, plans specifying roles and responsibilities

Types of Collaborative Arrangements

- Local (city and county) interagency disaster plans

- Mutual aid agreements among public safety and emergency management agencies geographically contiguous local jurisdictions

- Mutual aid agreements among other entities, e.g., utilities

- State-level interagency disaster plans

- Emergency management assistance compacts among states: neighboring states agree to provide assistance to one another

Types of Collaborative Arrangements

- Federal government: National Response Plan/Framework allows for the coordination of resources from participating federal agencies, providing support to states and local communities

- Federal resources are typically coordinated through the ten U. S. federal regions

Types of Collaborative Arrangements: Civil Society

- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)

- VOAD organizations (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)

- Citizen Corps: Federal program designed to enhance public participation in disaster and terrorism preparedness

Special Programs to Enhance Local Collaboration

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- Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI): Federal funding to improve capabilities and coordination among local emergency services agencies: fire, police, emergency management agencies, with an emphasis on terrorism

- Metropolitan Medical Response Systems (MMRS): Federal funding to improve capabilities and coordination among local health care and public health entities, with an emphasis on pandemics, other mass-casualty events

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) requires organizations responding to disasters to adopt structural and task arrangements specified in the Incident Command System (ICS)

This system is now called the National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Responders are trained and certified in NIMS to respond to emergencies at different levels of severity and complexity

General ICS/NIMS Framework
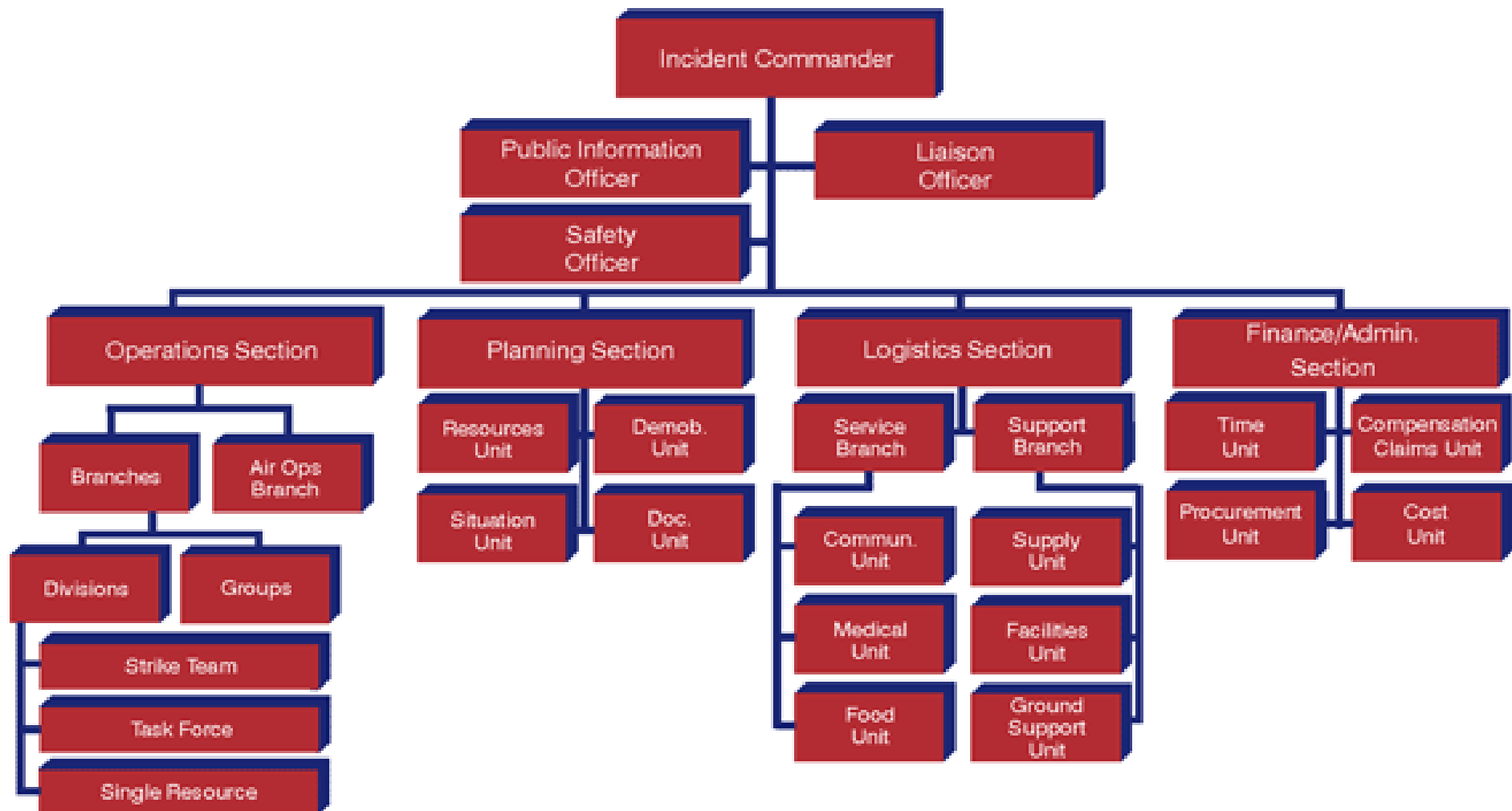
Contradictions and Challenges

- Communities, states, and regions vary considerably in their disaster experience and capabilities

- Federally-funded programs like UASI and MMRS may help collaboration within sectors (law enforcement, health and medical) but discourage collaboration across sectors
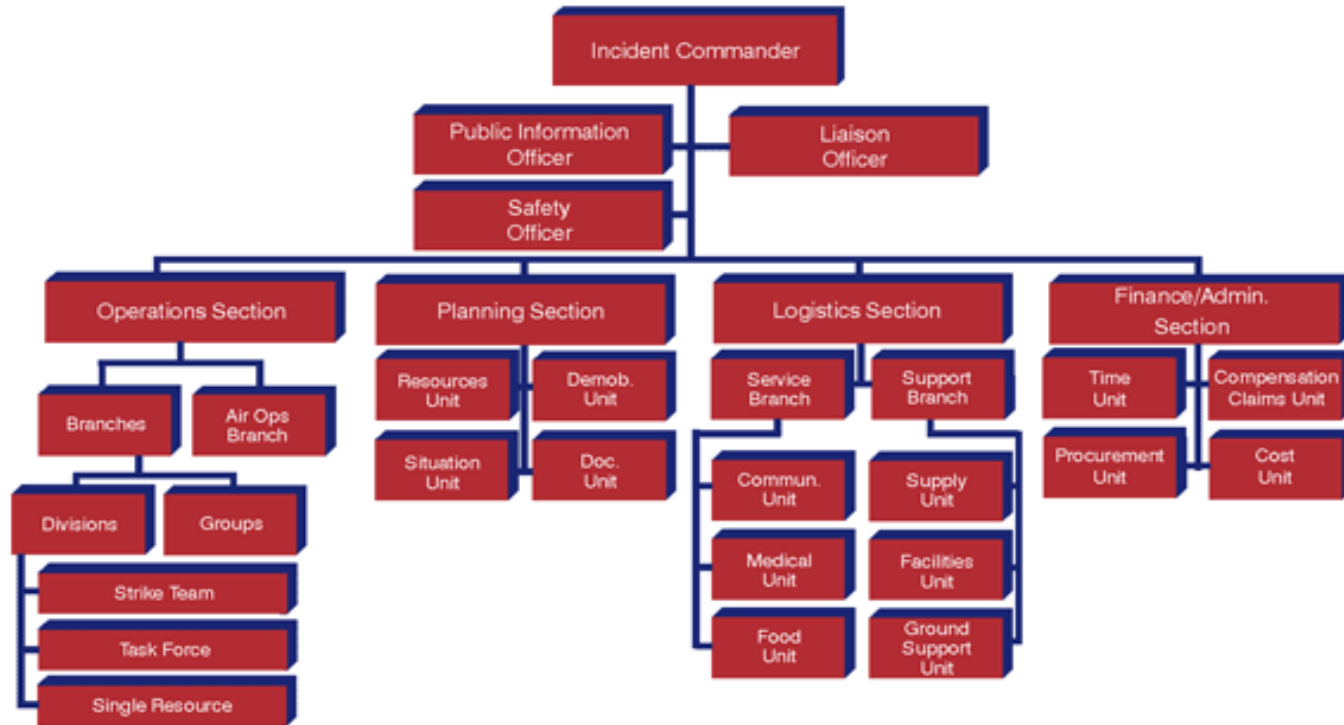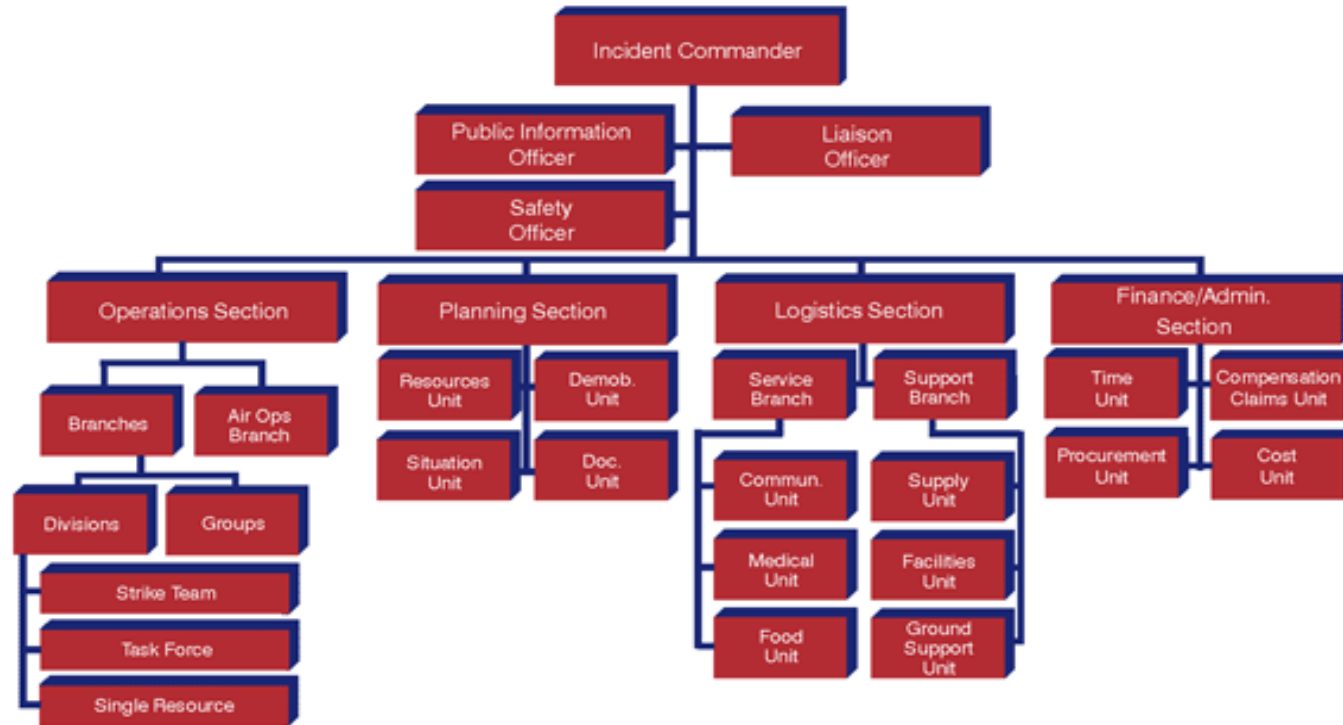
- Federally-funded programs (UASI, MMRS) target "traditional" response entities (fire, police, medical services)—not the private sector or civil society organizations

So what about the "whole society" framework?

Too Much Emphasis on Operations and Tactics?

Will Private Sector and NGOs Embrace the ICS/NIMS Framework?

Other Major Challenges

- Substantial budget cuts for this fiscal year will affect state and local emergency agencies (ex: Urban Area Security Initiative program was cut by 18 percent, or $162 million)

- Many states and local communities are experiencing significant financial crises. How will this affect emergency management capabilities?

Thank you!

Questions?