



# Standard Guide for Using the Incident Command System Framework in Managing Civilian Search and Rescue Operations<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F 1422; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers the use of the Incident Command System (ICS), (as developed in ICS-120), as the management framework for civilian search and rescue (SAR) operations.

1.2 Except as otherwise specified herein, the methods and requirements of the 1983 version of ICS-120 form a part of this guide.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety problems, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

- 2.1 *Incident Command Systems Publications:*  
ICS-120 Operational System Descriptions Manual<sup>2</sup>  
ICS-420 Field Operations Guide<sup>2,3</sup>

## 3. Significance and Use

3.1 The ICS framework is designed to be used for all kinds of emergencies and is applicable to both small day-to-day

situations as well as very large and complex incidents.<sup>4</sup>

3.2 ICS-120 describes the ICS framework, operating requirements, components, and procedures for organizing and operating an on-scene management structure only.

3.3 Users of this guide are expected to be familiar with the ICS.

3.4 Neither this guide nor ICS-120 provides a specific plan for managing a SAR operation, but rather outlines a process for developing a management framework.

3.5 Mission specific elements such as resource and strike team classifications and types, map symbols, T-card colors, position checklists, and staffing requirements do not form a part of this guide.

NOTE 1—These elements of the ICS are contained in ICS-420 and position checklists.<sup>2</sup> Information in these documents may be useful for managing a SAR operation but contains terminology specific to the fire services.

## 4. Procedure

4.1 SAR management personnel should develop the management structure in a top down manner similar to that outlined in ICS-120.

4.2 SAR management personnel should utilize the flexibility allowed by the ICS to modify the framework and fill only those functional positions necessary to conduct the operation.

4.3 Document the SAR operation for planning, analytical, legal, and historical purposes. Local forms, forms contained in Guide ICS-420, or similar forms may be used for documenting the operation.

<sup>4</sup> See ICS-120, p. 4.

<sup>1</sup> This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F-32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F32.02 on Search and Rescue Management.

Current edition approved Dec. 15, 1992. Published February 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Available from Fire Protection Publications, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

<sup>3</sup> The Field Operations Guide and Systems Description Manual are available combined in one volume from the same source. A Field Operations Guide, ICS-420-1, is also available.

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