



**Public Health Emergency  
Preparedness Informer**

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**Fall 2006**

**Disaster!!!  
Who's in Charge?**

*(To continue the series of articles on the National Incident Management System. Although volunteers are not required to complete the NIMS training course, some knowledge of the NIMS system will be helpful when responding to a public health emergency.)*

The Incident Command System was originally designed in the early 1970's by a group of local, state and federal agencies with wildfire protection responsibilities. This system improved the ability of fire forces to respond to any type of emergency. The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized, on-scene, all risk incident management concept. This management system is flexible in order to meet the demands of a large or small emergency or non-emergency situation.

The development of Incident Command was necessary after certain weaknesses in emergency response management were recognized. These weaknesses were identified as: terminology was not standardized for all agencies, lack of capability to expand or contract as

situation changed, communications not integrated, no consolidation of action plans and designated facilities were not available. Efforts to address these difficulties resulted in the development of the original ICS model for effective incident management.

Incident Command is used for many events including celebrations or parades, concerts, fires, hazardous material spills, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, winter storms, search and rescue missions, biological outbreaks and disease containment and acts of terrorism. Some events can be handled by local emergency personnel. Some emergency events are large enough to require state and federal assistance. Designers of the system recognized early that ICS must be interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible to allow personnel from a variety of agencies to meld rapidly into a common management structure. The management system must also provide logistical and administrative support to ensure that operational staff can meet incident objectives while being cost effective. This system represents organizational "best

practices" and has become the standard for emergency management across the country.

To ensure effective incident management, all events (whether an emergency or non-emergency) that require any type of response activity benefit from using the Incident Command System. Without some sort of management in place to provide for command, control and communication, the result will most likely be chaos. The Incident Command System provides an effective tool to accomplish these tasks. Even events like concerts at McKenzie Arena, Riverbend Festival and the Hamilton County Fair require ICS for control, communication and safety.

ICS is a successful management system proven to improve efficiency and effectiveness in business settings and emergency response. This management is incorporated into the National Incident Management System and is used by emergency management in Hamilton County. Volunteers can take any of the ICS courses or NIMS online at [www.training.fema.gov](http://www.training.fema.gov).

**Preparedness Today**

The possibility of terrorist incident in the United States concerns most people. Natural disasters, especially during hurricane season, are also a concern. In our area, we may experience the aftermath of hurricanes in the form of tornadoes and severe thunderstorms. If a disaster occurs in your community, disaster relief organizations will try their best to reach you.

Most responses to an emergency be-

gin with the local level of government. The next step in response, if the emergency is too great for local government, is the state government and then the federal government.

Citizens need to be prepared because local responders might not be able to reach you immediately. Every citizen is a part of the national emergency management system. You have a responsibility to protect yourself and your family by knowing what to do before, during and after a disaster. Things you should know **before a disaster** are: know the risks and danger signs, purchase insurance which is not part of your homeowner's policy, de-

velop a family plan, and assemble a disaster supply kit. **During a disaster**, put your plan into action, follow the advice and guidance of officials in charge of the event, and remember to help others. **After the disaster**, begin to repair damaged property and take steps to prevent or reduce future loss.

*Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness (IS-22)* is FEMA's most comprehensive source on individual, family, and community preparedness. Find out more about citizen preparedness by visiting this website: [www.fema.gov/areyouready](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready)

Visit us on the web at [health.hamiltontn.org](http://health.hamiltontn.org)



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## *CHCHD Public Health Emergency Preparedness Informer*

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### **WINTER STORM SAFETY**

It is important to stay calm during any type of storm. Stay tuned to your local emergency radio or television station, and follow the advice of trained professionals. Here are some helpful hints:

#### **If Your Power Goes Out**

1. Assist family members or neighbors who may be vulnerable if exposed to extreme heat or cold.
2. Locate a flashlight with batteries to use until power comes back on. Do not use candles – this can cause a fire.
3. Turn off sensitive electric equipment, such as computers, VCRs, and televisions.
4. Turn off major electric appliances that were on when the power went off. This will help to prevent power surges when electricity is restored.
5. Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep cold in and heat out.
6. Do not use the stove to heat your home, this can cause a fire or fatal gas leak.
7. Use extreme caution when driving. If traffic signals are out, treat each signal as a stop sign – come to a complete stop at every intersection and look before you proceed.
8. Do not call 9-1-1 to ask about the power outage. Listen to the local radio stations for updates.

For more information visit: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) and type in winter storm safety in the search box.

### **10 Tips for Winter Weather Driving**

Although our section of the South receives very little in the way of heavy snowfalls, we do have an occasional wintry mix which makes driving treacherous. Listed below are some tips for safe driving in wintry weather.

1. Respect the winter weather. Plan extra time for your trip and drive slowly.
2. Wear your safety belt. Protect yourself and your loved ones by making sure everyone is buckled up before you begin your trip.
3. Don't drink and drive. Keep in mind that you have less reaction time when driving in hazardous conditions and that alcohol will decrease that reaction time.
4. Winterize your vehicle emergency kit. Make additions such as a blanket for warmth if you are stranded, a small shovel to dig out snow, and a bag of sand to help gain traction and for added weight. Other important items to include are a flash light, a first aid kit, ice scraper, lock deicer, and jumper cables.
5. Inspect your car. Check the antifreeze, make sure your tires are in good condition and have the correct amount of air, check your gas tank, and check your wiper blades.
6. Be ready for changes in weather conditions. The temperature may suddenly drop and rain may begin to freeze. Listen to your local forecast for updated weather conditions in your area.
7. Know how to react. If you have anti-lock brakes, don't pump them. Press them down as hard as you can. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, you will need to pump them. If you go into a skid, turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the front of the car to go which will keep the vehicle from skidding out of control. Prepare to counter steer 2 or 3 times to regain control.
8. Keep enough distance between you and the car ahead. During normal driving conditions the car ahead should be at least three car lengths in front of you. As conditions deteriorate, increase the distance for additional safety.
9. Don't be overconfident. If you drive a sport utility vehicle, you might make it through tough conditions. But remember— the bigger the vehicle, the harder it is to stop.

#### **Volunteer Information Update**

If you have moved, changed telephone numbers, or are no longer interested in being a volunteer, please complete the form below and return to the address at the top of this page or e-mail Susan McNabb at [susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov](mailto:susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to be a volunteer at this time. Please remove my name from the active volunteer list.