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# Unit 9: Managing and Adjusting the Operations Section

STUDENT GUIDE

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**Objectives**

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By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Identify key strategies for managing and adjusting the Operations Section
- Describe protocols for situations requiring multiple Operations Section Chiefs
- Describe the Operations Section Chief's responsibilities as they relate to planning
- Identify the purpose of staging areas and the duties of the Staging Area Manager
- Identify the purpose of the Air Operations Branch (AOB) and the duties of the AOB Director
- List developments that may require adjustments to the Operations Section

**Methodology**

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This unit uses lecture, an exercise, and discussion.

Students will be tested on this topic's content through the administration of Quiz 2 (to be administered upon completion of Unit 10). Knowledge of topic content will also be evaluated through the administration of the Final Exam (to be administered upon completion of the course).

**Time Plan**

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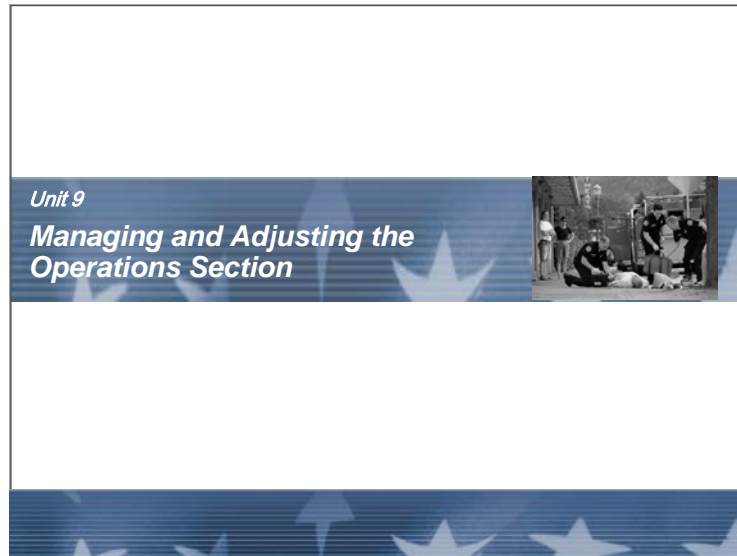
A suggested time plan for this unit is shown below. More or less time may be required based on the experience level of the group.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Time</b>
Lesson	2 hours
<b>Total Time</b>	<b>2 hours</b>

## Topic

Unit Title Slide

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**Key Points**

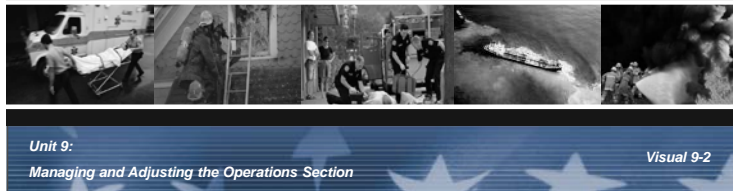
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**Scope Statement**

Through this unit, students will learn the key strategies for managing and adjusting the Operations Section. Organizational options for using two or three Operations Section Chiefs, additional planning tips, and the purpose of staging areas will be discussed in this unit. In addition, the students will gain an understanding of the purpose, structure, and purview of the Air Operations Branch, the reasons for adjusting tactics, and strategies for the effective implementation of these adjustments.

**Unit Terminal Objective**

Identify key strategies for managing and adjusting the Operations Section.

**Key Points**

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**Unit Terminal Objective**

Identify key strategies for managing and adjusting the Operations Section

**Unit Enabling Objectives**

- Describe protocols for situations requiring multiple Operations Section Chiefs
- Describe the Operations Section Chief's responsibilities as they relate to planning
- Identify the purpose of staging areas and the duties of the Staging Area Manager
- Identify the purpose of the Air Operations Branch (AOB) and the duties of the AOB Director
- List developments that may require adjustments to the Operations Section

To be an effective Operations Section Chief, it is necessary to manage all components that comprise the Operations Section. This includes Branches, Groups, Divisions, Air Operations, and Staging. The ability to adjust tactics and make changes on short notice is essential.

**Topic** Multiple Operations Section Chiefs

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**Multiple Operations Section Chiefs**

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- Both Operations Section Chiefs work for the Incident Commander as equals
- One Operations Section Chief supervises Tactical Operations
- One Operations Section Chief does planning and coordination
- Only one Operations Section Chief implements the IAP

*Unit 9:**Managing and Adjusting the Operations Section**Visual 9-3***Key Points**

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- Both Operations Section Chiefs work for the Incident Commander as equals
  - Teamwork is key
- Other options are sometimes used for complex incidents or incidents that are not staffed for a nighttime operational period
  - One Operations Section Chief does planning and coordination while the other does field supervision
- Under Unified Command, a Deputy Operations Section Chief from another agency may be utilized
  - Only one Operations Section Chief initiates and implements the IAP
- Trainee positions are desirable but must be approved by the Incident Commander and the responsible agency
  - Some agencies have automatic trainee requirements
- Use a Deputy Operations Section Chief position to reduce the span of control, to better manage the workload, or for special assignments (e.g., contingency planning)
  - Various aspects of the Operations Section Chief's job can be delegated to the Deputy Operations Section Chief

- Monitoring
  - Supervision of air operations
  - Incident planning
  - Supervision of highly technical Divisions/Groups/Branches where closer supervision is required
- Some Federal Agencies use a third Operations Section Chief for planning/coordination between the Planning and Operations Sections
    - This position is usually referred to as Planning Ops

### Planning Tips

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- Order enough resources to staff all operational periods
- Check back orders
- Plan for demobilization early
- Utilize and staff staging areas



Unit 9:  
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Visual 9-4

### Key Points

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- When ordering, remember to staff all operational periods and check on back orders for resources, etc.
- Check “fill or kill” orders to avoid resources being delivered that are no longer needed
- You will have cycles in the incident, including ebbs and troughs, that vary in severity; you’ll have to accommodate for this while planning for demobilization



**Topic** Staging Area Defined**Staging Area Defined**

- Forward location for temporary resource positioning
- Resources on maximum 3-minute availability



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Visual 9-5

**Key Points**

Staging areas are forward locations for temporary resource positioning. Resources should be on a maximum 3-minute availability. Staging areas are key for resources that you anticipate using, but, at present, do not know exactly where. You may intend to use them as part of a Contingency Plan and have them available should you need to implement your plan. The Operations Section Chief may gather resources in the staging area in anticipation of forming them into Strike Teams or Task Forces.

Resources that do not have an active line assignment may be kept in the staging area for a period of time to determine whether they will be reassigned or declared to be excess resources.

If personnel are in the staging area from the beginning of the incident, they should have an ICS Form 204, meaning that they are assigned to the staging area. Personnel who have been in the staging area all day are considered to have worked for this operational period and technically cannot work at night.

Staging areas are good places to share resources with Logistics. Sometimes if you are demobilizing a resource, they will want to first use it to assist with transport, etc. Avoid taking resources allocated to Logistics for Operations (e.g., don't take water tenders who are to water roads to fill up trucks).

**Topic**            Staging Areas

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**Staging Areas**

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- Assign a Staging Area Manager
- Operations Section Chief controls resources
- Set minimum drawdown levels
- Order replacement resources
- There may be multiple staging areas
- Staging Area Manager is responsible for staging area logistics

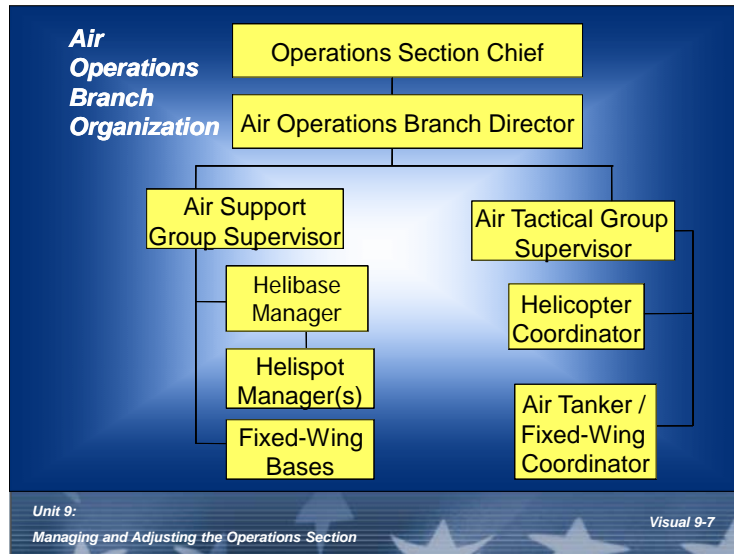
*Unit 9:**Managing and Adjusting the Operations Section**Visual 9-6***Key Points**

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Make sure the Staging Area Manager (STAM): (1) understands drawdown levels; and (2) understands his/her authority to reorder resources as necessary. The Staging Area Manager will contact Logistics to order the needed resources and is responsible for coffee, fuel, food, and so forth for staging area personnel. To ensure that the Staging Area Manager doesn't keep releasing resources and ordering more to fill the drawdown level, the Operations Section Chief should forecast resource needs. You can also ask your Staging Area Manager to order in increments as necessary.

Staging areas need to be staffed by a Staging Area Manager, who keeps an inventory of the staging area, acts as a point of contact with Resources in the Incident Command Post (ICP), and reports directly to the Operations Section Chief. Staging areas are a good intermediary position between being operationally employed and being on the demobilization wait list.

Make sure that your Staging Area Manager knows what you expect: If you want three excavators at all times in the staging area, the Staging Area Manager should know that he/she should contact you if one is used and only two remain.

**Topic** Air Operations Branch Organization**Key Points**

The key positions in the Air Operation Branch are:

- Air Operations Branch Director (AOBD)
- Air Tactical Group Supervisor
- Air Tanker/Fixed-Wing Coordinator
- Helicopter Coordinator
- Air Support Group Supervisor
- Helibase Manager

**Topic** Air Operations Branch Director (AOBD)

### Air Operation Branch Director (AOBD)

- Reports to Operations Section Chief
- Tracks pilot and aircraft duty hours
- Manages Agency restrictions
- Ground based
- Prepares ICS Form 220
- Manages air tactics and air resources
- Maintains constant communication with Operations Section Chief
- Maintains contact with Communications Center



Unit 9: Visual 9-8  
Managing and Adjusting the Operations Section

**Key Points**

The Air Operations Branch Director has authority over all (even non-incident) aircraft and air operations. The Air Operations Branch Director can request that the FAA establish a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) within a certain air space. TFRs typically apply to the media. The media or other aircraft may not become aware of a TFR if a flight plan is not filed. If a member of the Incident/Unified Command notes an unauthorized aircraft within the TFR, the AOBD can report this indiscretion to the FAA for enforcement. Military aircraft are not bound by TFRs.

**Duties:**

- Reports to Operations Section Chief
- Tracks pilot and aircraft duty hours
- Manages Agency restrictions
- Ground based
- Prepares ICS Form 220
- Manages air tactics and air resources
- Maintains constant communication with the Operations Section Chief
- Maintains contact with Communications Center

**Topic**            Need for Adjustments

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**Need for Adjustments**

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- Sudden change in weather
- Present tactics ineffective
- Safety
- Resource availability or capability
- Political or social events
- Significant events (injuries)
- Cost

*Unit 9:**Managing and Adjusting the Operations Section**Visual 9-9***Key Points**

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The biggest reason that you'll need to change tactics is resource availability (e.g., requested boats don't arrive on time). As a result, the plan has to be adjusted to work without boats. This means that you may have to adjust the IAP in the Operational Briefing. When this happens, be sure to emphasize that ICS Form 204 needs to be changed. Also, ensure that the Incident Commander is informed—because the last thing that you want to do is embarrass your Incident Commander in front of the Agency Administrator.

Other reasons:

- Sudden change in weather
- Present tactics not working
- Incident safety
- Political or social events
- Significant events such as injuries
- Costs

When making adjustments, timing is important. The window of opportunity is very short. If you don't act quickly, the opportunity may be lost.

**Topic** Making Adjustments

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**Making Adjustments**

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- Don't hesitate to adjust if changes are needed
- Involve others in decision making
- Clear with Incident Commander in advance of change
- Notify incident personnel of change
- Monitor any changes
- Contingency Plan

Unit 9:  
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Visual 9-10

**Key Points**

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Don't hesitate to change if adjustments are needed. The tendency is to stay with the present plan. If adjustments are really necessary, the Operations Section Chief will have to overcome resistance to change.

- Involve others in the decision-making process
- Clear with the Incident Commander in advance of any changes of objectives
- Make sure that all incident personnel are notified of the change
- Monitor the changes that were made
- Always have a Contingency Plan

**Objectives Review**

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1. *What are the protocols for situations requiring multiple Operations Section Chiefs?*
2. *What are Operations Section Chiefs' planning responsibilities?*
3. *What purpose do staging areas serve and what are the duties of the Staging Area Manager?*
4. *What is the purpose of the Air Operations Branch (AOB) and what are the duties of the AOB Director?*
5. *What developments may require adjustments to the Operations Section?*

Unit 9:  
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Visual 9-11

**Key Points**

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**Unit Terminal Objective**

Identify key strategies for managing and adjusting the Operations Section

**Unit Enabling Objectives**

- Describe protocols for situations requiring multiple Operations Section Chiefs
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