



S-420 Unit 5: Incident Management Planning Processes

Summary:

Both strategic and operational planning processes are necessary to effectively manage an incident. While interrelated, the focus, and the processes are distinct and different. In this unit the student will become familiar with each and discuss how both are critical. The student will learn how an Incident Management Team (IMT) utilizes a series of briefings and meetings to carry out incident planning and present it to the resources assigned to the incident.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Discuss the similarities and differences between strategic and operational planning processes.
- Describe a process for strategic planning.
- Describe a process for operational planning.
- Discuss the purpose of the IMT's meetings and briefings as they relate to strategic and operational planning.

Instructor Note:

The content of this unit is applied throughout the Simulation (SIM). The strategic planning content is applied in Simulation Phase 2. The operational planning cycle content is applied in all SIM phases. Unit instructor should review all SIM phases prior to instruction. Unit Instructor and SIM Coordinator should discuss how the unit content and the Simulation interact.

Unit at a Glance:

| Topics | Method | Duration |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| What is Strategic Planning? | Presentation | 30 Minutes |
| What is Operational Planning? | Presentation | 30 Minutes |
| Planning Processes Exercise | Exercise | 15 Minutes |
| Briefings and Meetings | Presentation | 15 Minutes |
| Total Unit Duration | | 1 Hour 30 Minutes |

Materials:

- Flip chart, paper, markers-one per group.
- Ability to display images and video on large screen.
- White board or easel access for group breakout

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Slide 1



The image shows three individuals in a professional setting, likely a meeting or training session. On the left, a man in a green jacket and brown cap is speaking. In the center, a woman in a dark polo shirt with a logo is listening. On the right, a man in a white polo shirt is also listening. In the background, other people and a large whiteboard with diagrams are visible.

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Slide 2

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- Review unit objectives.

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Slide 3

Strategic Planning

- What is strategic planning?
 - The intent of *strategic planning* is to ensure alignment between Agency Administrator (AA) direction, Incident Objectives, Strategy and Tactics.
 - A strategic plan is a high level course of action designed to achieve objectives under conditions of uncertainty.
 - Strategic planning begins long before the incident.
 - Once an incident starts strategic planning considers how the incident is expected to evolve in the next 3-5 days.
 - Once an IMT has taken command of the incident they become responsible for strategic planning
 - The AA remains responsible for selecting and approving incident strategies.

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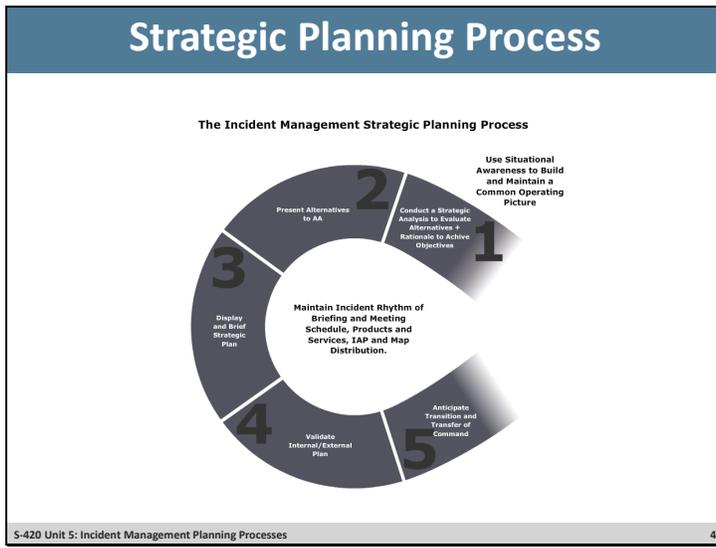
- The intent of strategic planning is to ensure alignment between AA direction, Incident Objectives, Strategy and Tactics. This is accomplished through a strategic planning process that helps to build a common operating picture between AA, IMTs, firefighters, cooperators, and the public.
- Strategic planning anticipates how an incident will evolve over the course of several days and determines appropriate IMT response.
- Pre-incident strategic planning includes Land/Resource Management Planning, Fire Management Plans, Fuels Reduction Plans, and Community Wildfire Protection Planning, etc. These planning efforts provide important situational awareness and guidance once a fire starts. The local unit is responsible for conducting pre-incident strategic planning and for communicating it to an IMT during the AA in-brief.
- Once an incident starts, strategic planning considers how the incident is expected to evolve in the next 3-5 days, or longer. This process evaluates risk and complexity and may indicate the need for an IMT. The IMT is often given a preferred initial strategy as part of the in-brief.
- IMTs should conduct their own strategic assessment and analysis as they take command of an incident and gain situational awareness, any time conditions change and the current strategy is no longer adequate, and as they prepare to transition with another IMT or incident management organization.

Note to Instructor

There is no single interagency agreed-upon process for strategic planning; the following material is “a” process that can be used. **This process is discussed and practiced in detail in following units.**

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- Use situational awareness and strategic assessment to build and maintain a common operating picture.
 1. Conduct a strategic analysis to evaluate alternatives to accomplishing incident objectives.
 2. Present alternatives to the AA.
 3. Display and brief the strategic plan.
 4. Validate internal and external plans based on any changes to the chosen strategy.
 5. Anticipate transition and transfer of command early.

Discussion

- During the first operational period the IMT is likely working off the strategy developed as the incident emerged and progressed through initial attack.
- Discuss the importance of thinking strategically, performing a strategic assessment, while collecting your initial situational awareness of an incident.
- Discuss the importance of a “shadow day” in preparing the IMT for success. When might a “shadow day” not be possible? What are the effects of that?

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Slide 5

Operational Planning

- What is Operational Planning?
 - *Operational Planning* occurs every operational period. Operational planning looks at what will be accomplished with the resources available during the next operational period to accomplish the agreed upon objectives and contributes to carrying out the incident strategy.

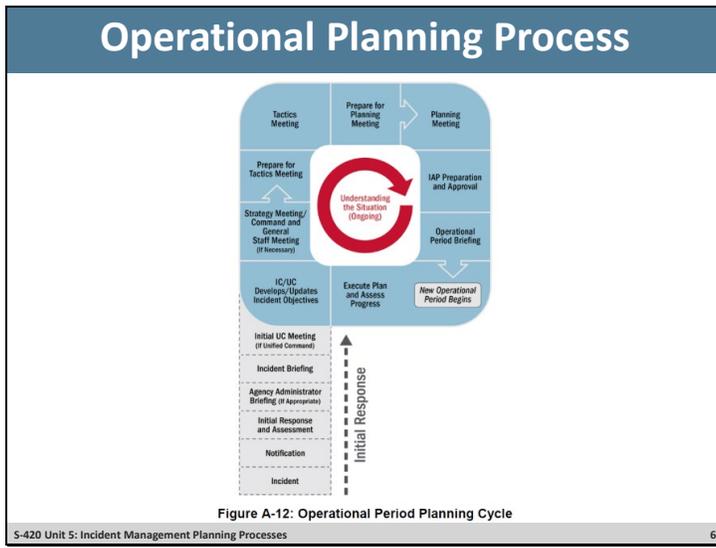
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- The operational planning process primarily guides decision making and communication for the next operational period.
- The strategic plan should help inform the operational plan. Conversely, as operations progress, and/or conditions change, updates to situational awareness should inform the strategic Plan.
- The planning process has evolved over the years and is still evolving. There are different versions of the planning process; however, the processes are all very similar.

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- The “plan” the process is referring to is the Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- The IAP is a written plan that provides clear direction and includes a comprehensive listing of the tactics, resources, and support required to manage an incident for an operational period.

Note to Instructor

The operational planning cycle will be discussed in detail and practiced in detail in following units.

Discussion

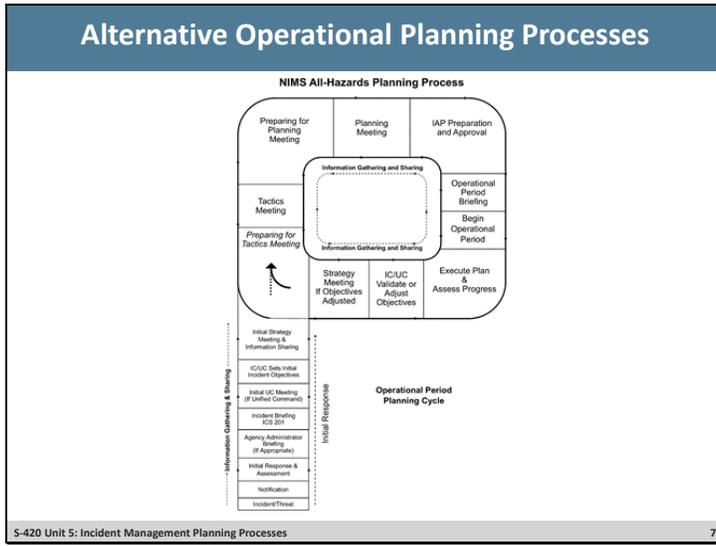
- The timeline of an incident appears to be linear with a beginning, execution of actions, and an end.

□ Discuss how the process actually is cyclical and responsive to the dynamics of an incident.

Alternative operational planning processes are shown on slides 7 and 8.

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Slide 7



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Slide 8



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Slide 9

Planning Processes Exercise

- Will emphasize the importance of both strategic and operational planning.

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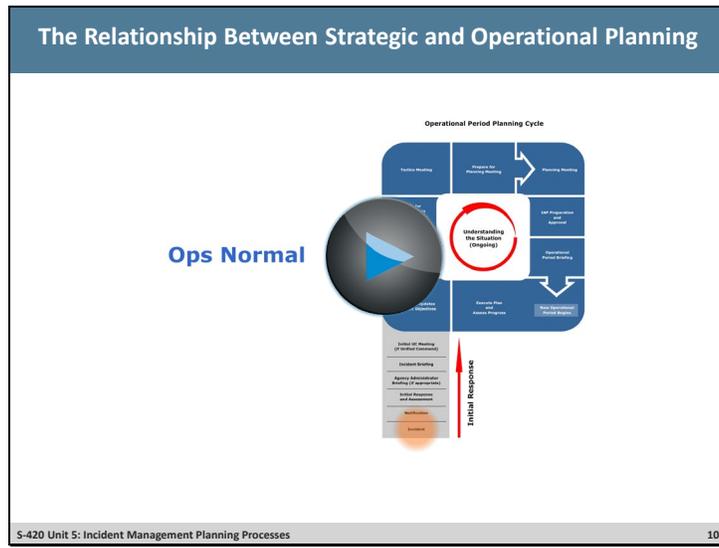
Exercise: Planning Processes Exercise (15 minutes)

Purpose: To emphasize the importance of both strategic and operational planning.

- Choose from among the scenarios below, and go through as many as time allows.
- For each scenario, discuss the operational, and strategic planning considerations and actions to be taken.
- **Scenario #1**
You're astronauts trapped on a planet. You have only a small amount of food and supplies. Communication is broken. A rescue craft will arrive in 5 days. How do you survive until rescued? What do you need to think about? Plan for? Mitigate? How do you handle it mentally and physically?
- **Scenario #2:**
A fuel tender has leaked a significant amount of diesel into a nearby river.
- **Scenario # 3**
In the next 3 to 5 days, the fire is projected to come in close proximity to the site of a country music festival that is scheduled to take place in 4 days.
- **Scenario #4**
The Governor is scheduled to visit fire camp during a time period that is expected to produce some strong wind events that could cause extreme fire behavior.
- **Scenario #5**
The National caterer will not arrive for 5 days.
- **Scenario # 6**
Cadre create a scenario.

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Slide 10



❑ Play Animation

Title The Relationship Between Strategic and Operational Planning

Summary Animation of operational planning cycle

Time (00:43)

No Audio

❑ Discussion

- While the focus of strategic planning and operational planning are different, they are interrelated. Strategy informs operations and operations inform strategy.
- The key is recognizing when a change to the situation indicates the need to change incident objectives and the overall incident strategy. This might be a small change or a drastic alteration of the plan.
- In the PPT the above image is animated showing how the operational planning cycle is implemented based on the current strategy. Changes to the situation prompt a re-evaluation of the incident strategy at which point the strategic planning process is implemented. As this animation is played describe what is happening. Each step in the both processes is discussed in detail in later units. This is only an introduction to the concept. The animation shows three operational periods between a strategic planning meetings however this re-evolution is prompted by change, not a fixed schedule.
- Ideally, strategic planning prompts the IMT to consider and plan for where the incident will be in the next 3-5 days while continuing operations today.

❑ Questions

- What might warrant a change to an incident's objectives and strategy? How would this be decided by and IMT and communicated to resources?
- How does each functional area contribute to this decision?

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❑ Discussion

- Drastic changes to an incident's strategy can cause friction with incident personnel and with stakeholders. Discuss what each functional area might be able to do to limit this friction.

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Slide 11

Briefings and Meetings

Briefings are held to present specific information about the incident (such as agency in-brief and operations briefing).

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- Because briefings and meetings are essential elements of planning, C&G need skills to give effective briefings and host effective meetings.

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Slide 12

Tips for Effective Briefings

- Know the type of briefing, venue, and audience.
- Organize the information (beginning, body, and conclusion).
- Be prepared.
- Be thorough enough for people to understand intent but brief enough to accommodate time constraints.
- Sometimes telling the story is more effective than just stating the facts.
- Use common terminology. Be familiar with local names and places.

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- For large audiences use maps as a vicinity reference. Have a back-up plan if using digital media.
- Exhibit command presence:
 - If not introduced, introduce yourself, and your position.
 - Do not turn your back on the crowd.
 - Establish eye contact.
 - No sunglasses or coffee cups.
 - Rehearse and avoid ah's and um's.
- Recognize the power of debriefing. A debrief is really any form of communication and it helps ensure everyone has the same operating picture. Debrief quickly and often to improve understanding of the situation.

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Slide 13

Tips for Effective Meetings

- Have a need, purpose, and agenda.
- Be timely and stay on track.
- Appropriate meeting place.

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- Meetings (such as the tactics meeting and planning meeting) are held during the planning cycle to process information and make decisions.

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