

Incident Command: A Virtual Approach to Safe Operations In Crisis

INTRODUCTION

- Healthcare organizations of all types have traditionally used the Incident Command System (ICS) to provide evidence-based responses to any crisis that an organization might face. The ICS is usually characterized by in-person, centralized gatherings in response to short-term crises.
- The ICS guides how to organize assets to respond to an incident and processes to manage the response through its successive stages (concept of operations). All response assets are organized into five functional areas: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Administration/ Finance. The ICS is designed to be used when an incident occurs until the incident no longer exists.
- TRU Community Care had utilized the traditional ICS approach before the COVID-19 pandemic. The long-term nature of the pandemic highlighted many opportunities to make this process more effective. Maintaining a practical ICS for more than a year was a challenge for our independent hospice/ ambulatory care organization.
- To address this challenge, the team set out to develop a responsive ICS that was virtual, addressed the five areas of functionality, and was sustainable over the long term and applicable to other secondary crises that occurred during the pandemic.



METHOD

- The first modification to the incident command process was moving to a virtual platform. This adaptation was ideally suited to current conditions.
- The team experimented with meeting frequency and duration to ensure adequate attention to the crisis.
- Meetings were structured to educate participants on ICS and basic facilitation principles.
- Changes to the ICS meetings were proposed as needed to meet current evidence-based practice.
- Meeting agendas were transformed to promote the smooth exchange of information.
- Roles were defined, and expectations were developed for each participating member.
- Internal and external communications were examined throughout the project.

APPROACH

- ➔ Interdisciplinary
- ➔ Virtual
- ➔ Responsive
- ➔ Sustainable

Incident Command System Template  Affirming life at every step of your journey with illness and loss.

Incident: _____

Incident Commander: _____ Scribe: _____

Meeting Date, Time, Location: _____

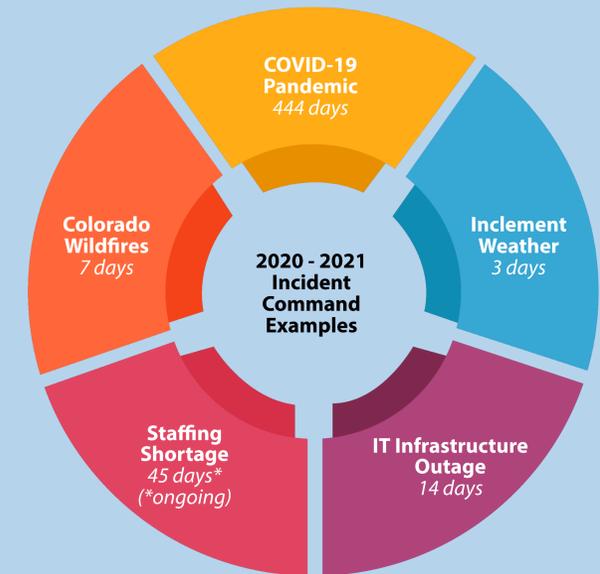
Key Data Sources: _____

Standing Agenda:

- Service Area/ Business Unit Updates
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Task Updates/ Follow-Up
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Next Meeting
 - Date, Time, Location: _____
 - Incident Commander: _____
 - Scribe: _____

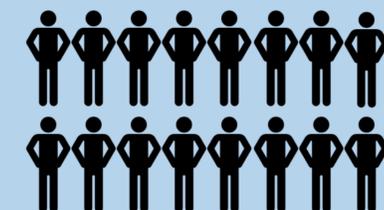
[Download at trucare.org/ICS-template](https://trucare.org/ICS-template)

RESULTS



Uninterrupted Patient Care
Continued Census Growth

Average Attendance: 16



DISCUSSION

By modifying the traditional Incident Command System (ICS) to meet present day challenges, smaller, decentralized ambulatory care providers can have a more effective response to a crisis.

Check out this poster along with our other evidence based contributions here

