**INCIDENT LEVEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

In order to enhance on-scene response to natural and technological emergencies at the local level, there is a need to have an incident level management system in place that provides a standardized organizational framework that responders can quickly recognize and adapt to. The management system will provide the necessary tools to effectively manage and coordinate local and regional resources, utilizing common terminology and standard operating procedures.

The incident level management system must be designed to quickly organize and integrate multiple disciplines into one functional organization that has the flexibility to adapt to and meet the demands of an emergency/disaster situation involving one or more jurisdictions. The strength and effectiveness of such a system will be based upon written procedures that reflect department policies, and provide in terms of their size, scope, and nature of the hazard(s). These procedures, which will be implemented routinely to address any given situation, can also be used as a training tool for department staff, as well as provide a baseline for assessments and critiques of emergency operations following an actual incident or exercise to test the plan.

Augusta County recognizes the critical importance of having such an organizational structure in place and has adopted the Incident Management System (ICS), comprised of five functions, which include the following: command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administration. An Incident Commander is responsible for ensuring that all functions identified above are working in a coordinated manner to fulfill the established objectives and overall management strategy that was defined for the emergency situation. An Operations Section Chief, who reports directly to the Incident Commander, is designated to conduct the necessary planning to ensure operational control during emergency operations. This system has been proven nationally to be capable of adapting to a variety of situations with relative ease, while allowing the Incident Commander to maintain a continuous and reasonable span of control and operational efficiency throughout the emergency response.

Incidents that involve multiple jurisdictions will be managed under a Unified Command management structure composed of individuals designated by their jurisdictions or by departments within a single jurisdiction, who are jointly responsible for the development of objectives, strategies, and priorities to effectively address the emergency situation at hand. All agencies involved in the emergency response report to one Incident Command Post and follow one Incident Action Plan similar to a single command structure. Also, as in a single command structure, the Operations Section Chief, who is designated by the Unified Command, will be responsible for the implementation of the plan.

The designation of the Operations Section Chief is based on a variety of factors which may include, but not limited to, such things as which jurisdiction has the greatest involvement, the amount of resources involved, existing statutory authority, and mutual knowledge of the individuals qualifications.

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM**

Augusta County by adoption of this Emergency Operations Plan adopts the use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as its Incident Command System. NIMS was issued on March 1, 2004 by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as a requirement of Homeland Security Directive (HSPD)-5, Management of Domestic Incidents. NIMS provides a consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments to work effectively together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.