

Example Questions for OSC Qualification Board

These questions were prepared by CG-IMAT and other Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to assist with ICS oral qualification boards.

- Question: What are common priorities/goals set by the IC/UC?
Expected Answer: IMH 4-2: Life Safety, Protection of Environment, Protection of Property, Facilitation of Commerce (Restoration of Marine Transportation System), Threat to Homeland Security, Investigation as to Cause, etc.
- Question: Where do you find example tasks/work assignments?
Expected Answer: IMH pages 4-10 to 4-13.
- Question: What is the difference between a task and an objective?
Expected Answer: Objectives are the IC/UC's desired outcomes. Specific tasks are given to the OSC at the Command and General Staffing Meeting to complete. Objectives are specific operational "tasks" to be completed by the OSC which become specific tactical work assignments. See IMH pages 4-4 to 4-9. In addition to operational objectives assigned to the OSC the IC/UC will assign management objectives or tasking not captured in the IAP to the rest of the command and general staff on an Incident Open Action Tracker ICS 233.
- Question: What's the difference between a management objective and operational objective?
Expected Answer: operational objectives are objectives that the OSC must work on and develop strategies and tactics. Management objectives apply to the other command and general staff and do not end up with a specific operational strategy and tactic/work assignment.
- Question: Who fills the OSC role if no OSC position is filled?
Expected Answer: The IC.
- Question: How would you staff key ICS positions in a response?
Expected Answer: Operations is built bottom up, all others top down as needed. For each op period, OSC decides before Tactics meeting how Ops Section will be organized based on the tactics/resources utilized.
- Question: What Types (1, 2, 3, 4, and/or 5) of incidents have an IAP?
Expected Answer: 1, 2, and 3.
- Question: What Type of incident(s) is an Incident Management Team (IMT) used?
Expected Answer: Type 1, 2, and 3. Type 4 and 5 are usually managed by CG Command Center with some possible plus up of staff.
- Question: What typical ICS positions are filled on a Type 3 incident?
Expected Answer: It depends on the incident but can be as small as IC and ops staff and large as filling all command and general staff and unit leaders (on verge of being a type 2 incident).

Example Questions for OSC Qualification Board

- Question: Who determines the objectives?
Expected Answer: IC/UC.
- Question: Who determines the strategies?
Expected Answer: OSC with input from PSC.
- Question: Who determines the tactics/work assignments?
Expected Answer: OSC with input from PSC and planning section staff.
- Question: How does the OSC determine the tactics/work assignments?
Expected Answer: OSC decides before tactics meeting what tactics/work assignments and resources are required to meet the operational objectives set by the IC/UC. This is done on the ICS-215. The ICS-234 may be filled out before the ICS-215, to show the progression from objectives, to strategies to tactics.
- Question: What is the difference between an objective, strategy and tactic?
Expected Answer: Objective – The IC/UC's desired outcome; Strategy – The plan to achieve an objective; Tactic – How to accomplish objectives designated by strategy.
- Question: Describe how the ICS-234 is used?
Expected Answer: The ICS-234 may be filled out before the ICS-215, to show the progression from operational objectives, to strategies to tactics. It is an optional form and if it isn't filled out, the OSC has done this in their head. It is filled out before the tactics meeting.
- Question: Describe how the ICS-215 is used?
Expected Answer: The ICS-215 shows the tactics/work assignments and specific resources are required to meet the operational objectives set by the IC/UC. On the y-axis is the work assignment and x-axis the resources to be utilized. It is NOT put in the IAP.
- Question: Describe how the ICS-204 is used?
Expected Answer: The ICS-204 shows the tactics/work assignments and specific resources are required to meet the operational objectives set by the IC/UC for a particular Division or Group. It includes communications to be utilized.
- Question: What is the purpose of the ICS-208 form and who fills it out?
Expected Answer: Document the Site Safety Plan (may be included in the IAP). SOFR
- Question: What is the purpose of the ICS-205 form and who fills it out?
Expected Answer: document specific communications for the IAP. LSC or COML.
- Question: What is the purpose of the ICS-206 form and who fills it out?
Expected Answer: document specific medical plan for the IAP. LSC or MEDL

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- Question: What forms are found in the IAP?
Expected Answer: 202, 203, 204, 205 and 206.
- Question: What is an operational period?
Expected Answer: period of time utilized for the incident action plan (IAP). Usually 12 or 24 hours but can be longer (2 days to week op periods).
- Question: When does the OSC talk to the IC about what's going on in Operations?
Expected Answer: Standard Ops updates and critical information reporting thresholds (e.g. deaths/injuries beyond simple first aid, significant changes in ops, etc.)
- Question: How does the OSC work with the PSC?
Expected Answer: various – works closely with PSC on 215 and 204's, etc.
- Question: How does the OSC work with the PSC and Planning Units?
Expected Answer: various – works with Situation and Resources to maintain accurate operational picture, Situation Unit and Environmental Unit provides scientific detail which helps OSC determine best tactics to utilize, etc.
- Question: How does the OSC interact with the RESL and SITL?
Expected Answer: closely – go into how feed RESL and SITL ops info.
- Question: How do you let RESL know of a change in status of a resource?
Expected Answer: ICS-210, ICS-213, verbally, scrap of paper, etc.
- Question: How does the OSC get feedback from Operations Section Staff?
Expected Answer: various – should set up routine calls to OPBDs, DIVS to understand operational picture and reassign resources as needed to meet operational objectives, etc.
- Question: When do you need an Air Ops Group, Air Ops Branch?
Expected Answer: Bottom up – as you add more Air resources, might choose to have Air Ops Tech spec to help manage air assets if not to level of group/branch.
- Question: How often does the OSC need to get eyes in the field?
Expected Answer: at least once every operational period.
- Question: How does the OSC use the IAP? What happens when the IAP doesn't meet needs?
Expected Answer: various – the IAP should be the plan of action which the OSC had input on for tactical actions that will best meet objectives. If IAP developed properly, it best fits the current operational picture, if not the OSC must assign resources to best meet needs and should give feedback to PSC and Planning Section on how to make it better next op period.

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- Question: How do you change an IAP during an op period?
Expected Answer:
- Question: How can an OSC utilize Deputies?
Expected Answer: As field personnel, as technical experts in that particular mission area
- Question: How can a technical specialist assist the OSC?
Expected Answer: various – a technical specialist is an expert in a particular field and can assist the OSC in determining various tactics and resources to utilize. We are not experts in everything so a technical specialist can be a real help for those areas we are not as skilled.
- Question: How does the OSC interact with the SOFR?
Expected Answer: closely – go into how ops info affects development of the 215a, how SOFR can stop ops, how to mitigate risks, etc.
- Question: What skill sets does the OSC need to have?
Expected Answer: various – leader, manager, decision maker, team player, etc.
- Question: Given a scenario (need to develop as handout), What are key operations section staff (overhead) you will need?
Expected Answer: Various but should match up.