

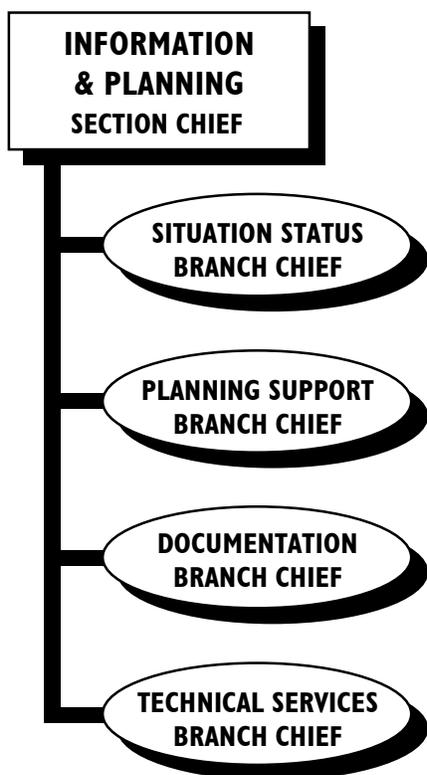
VII. SECTION MANAGEMENT

A. MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The mission of the Information and Planning Section Chief is to establish the responsibilities and direct the operations of the Section. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Coordinating and directing Section activities.
2. Ensuring adequate staff, equipment, and supplies are available to support Section responsibilities.
3. Ensuring the Section supports, and is supported by, the ERT.

**Figure VII-1
Section Management**



B. ORGANIZATION

Section management consists of a Section Chief and, when required, a Deputy Section Chief. If the disaster workload does not support a dedicated deputy section chief, designate this responsibility to a branch chief. In some cases, a third position (Clerical Specialist) may be required to provide dedicated administrative support. As always, staffing of individual positions will be determined by the magnitude and scope of the disaster and evolving requirements of the Information and Planning Section and ERT. The two standard Section management positions are depicted in the organizational chart at left. Individual position descriptions and responsibilities are outlined in Appendix G.

C. MANAGEMENT

While effective management is a challenging enterprise under the best of circumstances, it can become positively daunting within a disaster response environment. Not only is the operational situation likely to be highly charged and the pressure to meet deadlines often intense, but many section employees may be working together for the first time, or be very inexperienced in the area of their assigned duties. All these factors can contribute to a potentially combustible organizational situation that the Section Chief must quickly transform into a synchronous, smooth-running operation. Accomplishing such a feat involves both art and science. It requires not only a keen sense of situational intuition, but also a firm grasp of human and organizational dynamics. Adept management skills are not enough. An effective Section Chief must be thoroughly familiar not only with the entire range of section responsibilities and products, but also with the organizational

structure of the ERT and responsibilities of the various ERT elements. Most importantly, the Section Chief must be able to continually visualize the needs of the situation and organize an effective response. Both at the beginning and in the end, organization is the Section Chief's key to effective management.

D. STAFFING

1. Determining staffing needs is a critical initial (and continuing) task of the Section Chief, and must be accomplished immediately. However, establishing a Section staffing requirement involves more than just determining the total number of needed personnel. The Section Chief must also determine what *positions* are needed, as well as what *level of experience* is required for each position. Too few experienced personnel may cripple the Section's ability to efficiently and effectively support the needs of the ERT, particularly during the highly dynamic, initial response phase. Conversely, seeking only highly experienced reservist cadre members may result in the section being understaffed at a critical time. Regardless of source(s), overstaffing is preferable to understaffing. The most common error of inexperienced Section Chiefs is to understaff the Section during the initial stages of the response operation. The consequences of such understaffing can be profound: reduced support; inferior products; loss of credibility with the FCO and other ERT elements; and employee resentment and dissatisfaction.

2. The size and composition of the initial contingent of ERT Information and Planning Section personnel will normally be determined by the responsible Region, using Region permanent full-time (PFT) and reservist resources. However, the Section Chief should not wait until arrival at the ERT operating location to begin determining Section staffing requirements. Immediately upon notification to deploy to a disaster site, the Section Chief should:

- a. Relay your requirements to the Region Cadre Manager.
- b. Contact the branch chief selectees, discuss the disaster situation, and jointly determine minimum staffing and experience requirements.

3. The four levels of functional experience are depicted in Figure VII-2, Qualification Levels. In addition, Figure VII-3 - Information and Planning Section Staffing Level Minimums, provides a non-binding, baseline reference for determining and establishing an initial staffing requirement, in terms of positions and numbers of personnel required.

Figure VII-2 - Qualification Levels

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
TRAINEE	BASICALLY QUALIFIED	FULLY QUALIFIED	EXPERT
REQUIRES CONSTANT SUPERVISION	REQUIRES MODERATE SUPERVISION	REQUIRES MINIMAL SUPERVISION	REQUIRES NO SUPERVISION

Figure VII-3 - Information and Planning Section Staffing Level Minimums

INFORMATION & PLANNING SECTION STAFFING LEVEL MINIMUMS				
STAFF POSITION	DISASTER TYPE			
	RECOVERY ONLY	MODERATE	MAJOR	CATASTROPHIC
SECTION MANAGEMENT				
SECTION CHIEF	1	1	1	1
DEPUTY SECTION CHIEF	AS NEEDED	1	1	2
CLERICAL SPECIALIST	0	0	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED
SITUATION STATUS BRANCH				
BRANCH CHIEF	1	1	1	1
INFORMATION COORDINATOR	AS NEEDED	1	2	4
INFORMATION ANALYST	AS NEEDED	1	2	4
FIELD OBSERVER	0	0	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED
CLERICAL SPECIALIST	0	0	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED
PLANNING SUPPORT BRANCH				
BRANCH CHIEF	1	1	1	1
PLANNING COORDINATOR	AS NEEDED	1	2	3
PLANNING SPECIALIST	AS NEEDED	1	2	3
CLERICAL SPECIALIST	0	0	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED
DOCUMENTATION BRANCH				
BRANCH CHIEF	1	1	1	1
REPORTS SPECIALIST	1	2	3	5
BRIEFING SUPPORT SPECIALIST	AS NEEDED	1	2	2
COMPUTER GRAPHICS SPECIALIST	0	AS NEEDED	1	2
DOCUMENTATION SPECIALIST	AS NEEDED	1	1	2
CLERICAL SPECIALIST	1	1	2	3
TECHNICAL SERVICES BRANCH				
BRANCH CHIEF	1	1	1	1
GIS COORDINATOR	AS NEEDED	1	1	1
GIS SPECIALIST	AS NEEDED	1	2	3
REMOTE SENSING COORDINATOR	AS NEEDED	1	1	1
TECHNICAL SPECIALIST	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED
CLERICAL SPECIALIST	0	0	0	AS NEEDED

Note: These minimums represent recommendations only.

4. Once deployed to a disaster location, the Section Chief should immediately:

a. Assess the situation and projected requirements (normally through discussions with Branch Chiefs and the FCO) to determine if any additional staffing is required.

b. If additional staffing is warranted, identify needed positions and requested qualification levels (see Figure VII-2).

c. Prepare a Staff Request Form (see Figure VII-4) and submit to the Staffing Group in the Administration Section's Personnel Branch.

Figure VII-4 - ERT Staff Request Form

Request Date: _____
STAFF REQUEST FORM PERSONNEL BRANCH - STAFFING GROUP (FEMA-DR-_____)
All requests for PFTs, reservists, and for recruiting local hires must be submitted to the ERT Administration Section Personnel Branch in order to be filled. To request staff, please complete the information below:
1. Requesting Official's Name, Position, Phone No., and Pager No.: _____ _____
2. Alternate Contact Name, Position, Phone No., and Pager No.: _____ _____
3. ERT POC Name, Position, Phone No. and Pager No. (Individual who can be contacted by the requested staff for further details about the assignment or deployment): _____ _____
INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENT
4. Functional Title: _____
5. Description of Assignment (if the needed skills are not clearly reflected in the Functional Title, specify exactly the skills that are required; for example, Reports Specialist with experience preparing Situation Reports): _____ _____
6. Requested Proficiency Level: _____
7. Estimated Duration of Assignment: _____
8. Duty Location: _____
9. Report Location (Address): _____ _____
10. Report Date: _____
11. Additional Information (e.g., bilingual requirement, by-name request, need PFT vs DAE, etc.) _____ _____ _____
***** FOR PERSONNEL OFFICE USE *****
LH _____ PFT _____ DAE _____ DATE RECEIVED: _____

5. The Section Chief must assess staffing levels on a continuing basis, making adjustments as necessary to meet an increasing or declining workload. As the ERT gradually transitions from a response to a recovery mode, the Section Chief should begin identifying positions and personnel who may be released. It is recommended that the Section Chief meet at least weekly with branch chiefs to assess staffing adequacy and identify staff augmentation requirements or reduction opportunities.

a. Section positions fall into four general staffing categories: those that can be filled by (1) full-time FEMA personnel, (2) cadre members, (3) local hires, or (4) other agency personnel. Most positions are filled by FEMA Reservists trained and certified in the position to which they are assigned. However, as the ERT transitions from a response to a recovery operation, local hires may be used to replace selected positions. The matrix at Figure VII-5 identifies each Section position and the anticipated source(s) for both *initial response* and follow-on *replacement* staffing. Note that in several cases, initial response staffing may be filled by either of multiple categories.

b. Because the most experienced personnel tend to be in the highest demand, many new PFTs and reservists have had limited opportunity to exploit their classroom training in a real-world environment. Therefore, whenever possible, Section Chiefs should encourage the deployment and use of trainees.

Figure VII-5 - Positional Staffing Sources

	POSITIONAL STAFFING SOURCE			
	PERMANENT FULL-TIME	CADRE RESERVIST	LOCAL HIRE	OTHER AGENCY
Section Chief	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	---	---
Deputy Section Chief	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	---	---
Situation Status Branch				
Situation Status Branch Chief	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	---	---
Information Coordinator	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	---
Information Analyst	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	---
Field Observer	---	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE
Planning Support Branch				
Planning Support Branch Chief	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	---	---
Planning Coordinator	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	---
Planning Specialist	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	INITIAL RESPONSE
Documentation Branch				
Documentation Branch Chief	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	---	---
Reports Specialist	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	---
Briefing Support Specialist	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	---
Computer Graphics Specialist	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	---
Documentation Specialist	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	---
Clerical Specialist	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	---
Technical Services Branch				
Technical Services Branch Chief	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	---
GIS Coordinator	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	---
GIS Specialist	---	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	---
Remote Sensing Coordinator	INITIAL RESPONSE	INITIAL RESPONSE	REPLACEMENT	INITIAL RESPONSE
Technical Specialist	---	---	---	INITIAL RESPONSE

E. SCHEDULING

1. The Section Chief, in collaboration with branch chiefs, will establish personnel work schedules for each staffed position in the Section. These schedules may or may not mirror the DFO hours of operation. (If it is necessary to schedule personnel for duty either before the DFO opens or after it closes, the Section Chief will need to coordinate DFO access with the Security Branch of the Administration Section.)

2. The Information and Planning Section does not work a set shift schedule. Scheduling assignments are based on supported projects, priorities, and deadlines. (For example, if the DFO opens at 0700 and the FCO Staff Meeting is scheduled for 0800, several Section positions may need to report to work several hours earlier in order to assure the morning Status Briefing and Daily Intelligence Summary are prepared.) This situational scheduling philosophy is depicted in the example schedule at Figure VII-6, which represents a 24-person Section operating during the early stages of a major disaster response. Note that shaded areas represent assigned work period.

Figure VII-6 - Example Information and Planning Section Schedule

	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SECTION CHIEF			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
DEPUTY SECTION CHIEF	5	6	7	8	9								5	6	7	8
SITUATION STATUS BRANCH CHIEF			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
INFORMATION COORDINATOR # 1	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4				
INFORMATION COORDINATOR # 2					9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
INFORMATION ANALYST # 1		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5			
INFORMATION ANALYST # 2				8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
PLANNING SUPPORT BRANCH CHIEF			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
PLANNING COORDINATOR			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
PLANNING SPECIALIST			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
DOCUMENTATION BRANCH CHIEF			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
REPORTS SPECIALIST # 1	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4				
REPORTS SPECIALIST # 2			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
REPORTS SPECIALIST # 3					9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
BRIEFING SUPPORT SPECIALIST		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5			
DOCUMENTATION SPECIALIST				8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CLERICAL SPECIALIST # 1			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
CLERICAL SPECIALIST # 2					9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TECHNICAL SERVICES BRANCH CHIEF			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
GIS COORDINATOR			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
GIS SPECIALIST # 1	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4				
GIS SPECIALIST # 2					9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
REMOTE SENSING COORDINATOR			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		
TECHNICAL SPECIALIST			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6		

3. The Section Chief should delegate the development of branch personnel schedules to individual branch chiefs, but must review and approve those schedules prior to implementation. As part of the review process, the Section Chief should ensure that branch schedules:

a. Are mutually supportive. For example, the Section Chief should ensure that information coordinators are scheduled to support the after-hours information collection requirements of other scheduled branch personnel who may require such support.

b. Are (to the extent practical) equitable. For example, the Section Chief should ensure that one branch is not *unnecessarily* working 12-hour shifts while the rest of the Section is working 8-hour shifts.

c. Provide sufficient time off for Section members. As a goal, strive to provide each Section member at least one day off out of every seven.

4. The Section Chief must balance the needs of the ERT and disaster response mission against the welfare of Section personnel, and recognize that the ERT mission will not be served by personnel who are too fatigued to perform their duties in a satisfactory manner. Therefore, if possible, establish a 10-hour workday for Section personnel, rather than the standard 12-hour shift. The pace of Section activities can easily lead to excessive fatigue and produce an associated increase in errors and mistakes. Reducing the workday to 10 hours will help reduce these fatigue-related human errors. While it is recognized that the 10-hour workday is an ideal; operational necessity may require 12-hour or longer workdays, at least during the initial response stages. In such cases, creative scheduling may be required, to include the use of such innovations as split-shifts (for an example, refer to the Deputy Section Chief row of Figure VII-6).

5. The practice of compensating for understaffing by imposing arduous workdays is not acceptable as a permanent solution to a protracted situation. Although long workdays may be imposed as a temporary, interim solution, it is the Section Chief's responsibility to ensure that staffing is quickly brought to a level commensurate with the workload. It is understood that temporary fluctuations in workload may occur, and provoke temporary but necessary changes in scheduling. However, sustained workload increases should be answered with a proportionate increase in staff.

6. One method of determining if staffing is workload-balanced is to develop an activity/production schedule that identifies key recurring activities and production requirements, normally by branch or functional area. Developing (and maintaining) such a schedule requires identifying those recurring ERT activities and products the Section is responsible to support or produce, linked to an hourly schedule. Developing (and maintaining) such a schedule requires input from each of the branch chiefs. A very generic example is depicted in Figure VII-7, Example Activity/Production Schedule.

Figure VII-7 - Example Activity/Production Schedule

TIME	ERT ACTIVITY	SECTION CHIEF	SITUATION STATUS	PLANNING SUPPORT	DOCUMENTATION	TECHNICAL SERVICES
0600 - 0700			Collect information updates from ERT elements			
0700 - 0800		Manage Section activities	Prepare Daily Intelligence Summary. Ensure SITROOM is configured and displays are updated.	Collect information on status of Operational Objectives from previous OPeriod	Prepare and update slides for FCO Staff Meeting	
0800 - 0900	FCO morning Staff Meeting	Facilitate FCO Staff Meeting	Provide Status Briefing at FCO Staff Meeting	Provide update on previous Operational Objectives at FCO Staff Meeting		
0900 - 1000				Prepare and distribute blank Operational Planning Worksheets to all ERT elements		
1000 - 1100						
1100 - 1200	Develop Operational Objectives for next OPeriod	Manage Section activities	Gather and analyze information; maintain SITROOM and keep displays updated; provide support as required or requested	Facilitate operational planning by ERT elements	Update briefing books, compile SITREP, and prepare other reports or products as required or requested	Provide continuing support as required or requested
1200 - 1300						
1300 - 1400						
1400 - 1500						
1500 - 1600						
1600 - 1630	Attend Action Planning Meeting	Attend Action Planning Meeting		Facilitate Action Planning Meeting	Submit draft SITREP for approval	
1630 - 1800				Prepare, publish and distribute Action Plan	Publish and distribute SITREP	
1800 - 1900	FCO evening Staff Meeting (optional)	Manage Section activities		Provide support as required or requested	Begin updating slides for morning FCO Staff Meeting	
1900 - 2000						

F. MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

1. The Information and Planning Section, as one of the first ERT elements to deploy to a disaster site (normally as part of the ERT-A), must be prepared to provide support immediately upon arrival. It is imperative, therefore, that communications and production equipment (and essential associated supplies) be immediately available to support deploying Section personnel, whether the base of operations be an established DFO or interim operating location. The method of assuring at least a minimal initial capability is through the concurrent deployment and use of a Section Go-Kit. Full capability will subsequently be provided by the ERT Logistics Section as part of the DFO establishment process.

a. Prior to deploying to a new disaster location, the designated Section Chief should contact the Region to determine if it will be necessary or prudent to request an Information and Planning Section Go-Kit, either from the Region (if they maintain such kits) or from the Disaster Information Systems Clearinghouse (DISC). A Section Go-Kit will not be required in all response situations (e.g., when the responders will report to and occupy an existing DFO). However, if the Section will be expected to temporarily operate from an interim location, a Section Go-Kit should be requested. A Section Go-Kit contains the equipment and supplies (refer to Figure VII-8, Section Go-Kit Contents) needed to conduct basic Information and Planning operations for several days, or until supported by the ERT logistics system. Regions are encouraged to establish and maintain at least one Section Go-Kit.

Figure VII-8 - Section Go-Kit Contents (Recommended Minimum)

SECTION GO-KIT ITEM	QUANTITY
COPIER	1
PERSONAL COMPUTER (LAPTOP)	2
FACSIMILE	2
PRINTER	1
PRINTER, PRO-IMAGE (ENLARGER)	1
EXTERNAL ZIP DRIVE	1
EXTERNAL CD or 3.5 DISK DRIVE	2

b. Upon arrival at the disaster location, the Section Chief should meet with Branch Chiefs and determine logistics requirements (equipment, supplies, support contracts, and space) for both the Section and the Situation Room. These requirements must be immediately conveyed to the ERT Logistics Section; *do not wait for your requirements to be solicited*. A baseline, by-branch breakdown of projected Section requirements is provided at Figure VII-9, Information and Planning Section Logistics Requirements. This worksheet can be copied, amended to reflect the requirements of the current situation, and turned in as-is to the ERT Logistics Section for support.

Figure VII-9 - Information and Planning Section Logistics Requirements

INFORMATION & PLANNING SECTION LOGISTICS REQUIREMENTS																				
LOGISTICAL ITEM	DISASTER TYPE																			
	MINOR					MODERATE					MASSIVE					CATASTROPHIC				
	C	S	P	D	T	C	S	P	D	T	C	S	F	D	T	C	S	P	D	T
BINDING MACHINE														1					1	
BULLETIN BOARD (3 x 4)	1					1	1				1	1	1			1	1	1		
CALCULATOR, HAND		1					1					1		1					1	
CAMERA, DIGITAL							1					1					2			
CHAIR, OFFICE	2	2	2	4	2	3	4	4	6	5	3	6	6	10	6	4	10	8	14	7
CLOCK, WALL (24 HOUR)	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
COMPUTER, PERSONAL (PENTIUM) W/ FAX/MODEM	1	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	5	3	2	4	4	7	4	3	5	4	10	5
COMPUTER, LAPTOP, (PENTIUM) W/ FAX/MODEM		1					1		1			1	1	1			2	1	2	
COPIER, PORTABLE												1					1			
COPIER, HIGH SPEED, COLLATING				1					1					1					2	
FAN, OSCILLATING	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
FAX, PORTABLE, PROGRAMMABLE	1								1			1		1			1		1	
FILE CABINET (4 DRAWER LETTER)		1		1			1		2			1		3			1		4	
FIRST AID KIT	1					1					1					1				
FLASHLIGHT	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
FLIPCHART W/ EASEL		2	1				2	1				2	2				2	2		
GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM (GPS) UNIT, HAND-HELD					1		1			1		1			1		2			2
MICROPHONE, SPEAKER/BRIEFER		1					1					2					2			
NETWORK CONNECTIONS	1	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	5	3	2	4	4	7	4	3	5	4	10	5
PAPER, ROLL, COATED, 36" x 150'										5					10					15
PAPER, ROLL, PRO-IMAGE		3					6					12					21			
PROJECTOR, OVERHEAD		1					1					2					2			
PROJECTOR, SLIDE, 35mm		1					1					1					1			
PAPERCUTTER				1					1					1					1	
PHONE, CELLULAR	1					1	1				2	1	1			2	1	1	1	1
PRINTER, LASER, B&W		1	1	1			1	1	1			1	1	2			2	1	3	1
PRINTER, LASER, COLOR									1					1					2	
PRO-IMAGE POSTER PRINTER		1					1					1					2			
PLOTTER PRINTER									1						1					2
RADIO, PORTABLE (AM/FM)	1	1				1	1				1	1				1	2	1		
SCANNER, FLATBED							1					1					1			
SCREEN, PROJECTOR		1					1					1					1			
SPEAKERPHONE	1					1	1				1	1				1	1			
STAPLER, HEAVY-DUTY				2					2					2					3	
TABLE, WORK (8 FEET)	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	4	3	2	3	3	6	4	2	6	4	8	5
TELEPHONE LINES	2	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	4	3	3	2	3	6	4	5	3
TELEVISION, COLOR							1					2					3			
VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER							1					2					3			
VIDEO CONVERSION UNIT														1					1	

Note: In the chart above, the narrow column designations are "C" = Section Chief; "S" = Situation Status Branch; "P" = Planning Support Branch; "D" = Documentation Branch, and "T" = Technical Services Branch.

2. The physical layout of the Section will depend largely on projected staff size and the area of the DFO to which the Section is ultimately assigned. To ensure that the Section is allocated an optimum (or, at the very least, adequate) workspace environment, the Section Chief must quickly identify and convey spatial requirements to the ERT Logistics Section. The worksheet at Figure VII-10 can be used to calculate minimum workspace requirements, based on projected staffing.

Figure VII-10 - Spatial Needs Determination Worksheet

Work space	--	+ 300 sq. feet	= 300 sq. feet	TOTAL
Display area	--	+ 300 sq. feet	= 300 sq. feet	= 600 sq. feet
Situation Room	--	+ 1300 sq. feet	= 1300 sq. feet	= 1900 sq. feet
# of GIS Specialists		X 120 sq. feet per person	=	=
# of GIS Suites		X 50 sq. feet per suite	=	=
# of stand-alone Plotters		X 40 sq. feet per plotter	=	=
# of all other staff		X 100 sq. feet per person	=	=

a. In addition to spatial considerations, the Section Chief must also be concerned about the physical placement of the Section within the DFO. As the informational nerve center of the ERT, it is functionally important that the Information and Planning Section (to include the Situation Room) be located in close proximity to the Operations Section and FCO. However, if a choice must be made between the two, establish the Section near the Operations Section.

b. Situating the Section in a large, open area is preferable to a cluster of smaller rooms. Segregating the branches into separate rooms tends to result in reduced intrasectional communication and increased polarization.

c. Once DFO space has been allocated, immediately prepare a representative floor plan (use the figures from the furniture and equipment request turned in to Logistics, as well as the figures from the staffing request turned in to Administration). If the assigned area does not provide sufficient workspace, notify the ERT Logistics Section immediately. Discrepancies between perceived need and spatial availability must be resolved before adjacent space is assigned and occupied by another ERT element.

d. Regardless of allocated space, branch activities that traditionally generate a considerable amount of external traffic (e.g., GIS production, information coordination) should be situated so as to minimize the disruption to other Section elements. Generally, that means positioning those activities near the entrance to the Section.

G. KEY INITIAL ACTIVITIES

The first several days of a disaster operation are typically the most chaotic time of the deployed response effort. It is a time, therefore, when arriving ERT elements are extremely receptive to organized direction. This temporary period of increased receptivity presents an unparalleled but highly perishable opportunity to lay the groundwork for a textbook Information and Planning Section operation. It is important that the Information and Planning Section Chief recognize and aggressively take advantage of this opportunity through the quick but firm institution of desired, standard section processes and procedures. The following represent key actions/activities that the Section Chief can, and should, take during the early stages of the initial response phase.

1. **The Branch Chief Meeting.** First impressions can be lasting impressions; so it is important that the Section generate a good first impression to the FCO and other ERT elements. Therefore, immediately upon arriving at the disaster interim operating location, the Section Chief should meet with his/her branch chiefs and lay out a course of action over the next few days. It is crucial that this meeting produce a unified understanding of each others responsibilities. During this meeting, the Section Chief should:

- a. Describe the specific actions he or she is planning to take to gain control of ERT information processing and management activities (see the following key initial activities).
- b. Determine branch capabilities and limitations.
- c. Articulate the Section's operational strategy for this period.

2. **The One-on-One FCO Briefing.** This is among the very first actions the Section Chief should take after meeting with the branch chiefs. Its purpose is to define the role of the Section and identify how the Section will be supporting the FCO and the ERT. Within 24 hours of arriving at the interim operating location, the Section Chief should schedule a meeting with the FCO to:

- a. Outline precisely how the Information and Planning Section will and can support the FCO, to include the identification of specific supporting products (briefings, Daily Intelligence Summary, etc.).
- b. Determine the FCO's preliminary priorities and specific support requirements or requests.
- c. Explain how the OPeriod Action Planning process works, and what the FCO's role is in that process.
- d. Propose standard FCO Meeting and OPeriod Action Planning Meeting times.

3. **The Initial Staff Meeting Briefing.** It is extremely important that the Section Chief establish his or her authority, and the role of the Section, at the initial staff meeting held by the FCO. It is essentially a “take-charge” briefing, in which the Section Chief confidently explains the Section’s role as the broker of information and planning activities for the ERT and FCO. Nothing is more crucial to the credibility of the Section at this juncture of the response than gaining the confidence and support of the ERT and the FCO. To achieve success, the Section Chief must pre-coordinate the briefing with the FCO (refer to previous paragraph), and be able to succinctly, confidently and firmly articulate information and planning processes to a group of questionably receptive peers. At this meeting, the Section Chief must be prepared to succinctly but cogently explain:

- a. How the Section will or can support the ERT and FCO, and what type of support is required of the ERT elements.
- b. The deadlines that the Section has or will establish for information or support, and why those deadlines are important.
- c. The OPeriod Action Planning process, to include OPeriod, FCO Priorities versus Operational Objectives, and task planning.
- d. The information collection process.

4. **The State Counterpart Meeting.** The principal source of authoritative information outside the ERT should be the State emergency management agency (or comparable emergency response organization), usually through their emergency operations center. To ensure that a positive, timely, mutually supportive information exchange occurs between the ERT Information and Planning Section and the state counterpart activity, the Section Chief should:

- a. Meet with the chief of the State ESF#5 (or counterpart activity) to establish information exchange protocols and identify interorganizational expectations. If possible, develop a responsive, reciprocal working arrangement; i.e., rather than exchange information once a day via individual SITREPs, communicate significant changes as they occur, or as information becomes known.
- b. Invite the State to locate an information and planning representative in the Situation Status Branch, to support (and be supported by) information collection efforts.
- c. Direct branch chiefs to open and maintain a line of dialogue with their counterparts (if any) at the State level. A number of State activities or products may prove quite helpful. For instance, some states have sophisticated GIS capabilities and will begin producing high-quality GIS products immediately after the disaster. It would be extremely valuable to identify these capabilities and production efforts for potential ERT use.

H. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

As mentioned in paragraph VII-C, being an effective Section Chief requires not only a comprehensive and commanding grasp of Information and Planning functions and responsibilities, but a thorough understanding and appreciation of managerial practices. Although it would be impractical to completely quantify managerial perfection here, the following represent some basic, recommended Section Chief practices.

1. Never malign, admonish, or non-constructively criticize a section employee in the presence of other employees. *Conversely, any praise or commendation directed toward an employee should always be delivered in the presence of the employee's peers.*

2. Insulate section personnel from direct criticism originating outside the section. Instead, personally field any section-generated problems, and then privately debrief the responsible Section employee. *Remember, insulation does not imply evasion. Convert negative feedback into positive reinforcement.*

3. Frequently solicit the opinions and counsel of your branch chiefs, and insist they do the same of their branch personnel. *Employees perform better when they recognize their opinions are valued and have an impact on operations.*

4. Do not unilaterally compromise (or ask employees to compromise) quality or accuracy for the sake of expediency. *Preserve your managerial and the Section's credibility at all costs. Impose high expectations on Section employees and insist those expectations be met.*

5. When reviewing SITREPs or other products, avoid wordsmithing. *If the verbiage conveys the intended meaning, and is grammatically accurate, refrain from changing it. However, stress simplicity and plain language.*

6. Always support your personnel in the presence of detractors from outside the Section. *However, if your employee was in the wrong, immediately counsel the employee in private and insist that he/she seek out and provide an explanation or apologize to the external party.*