Indicators of Incident Complexity

Common indicators may include the area (location) involved; threat to life, environment and property; political sensitivity, organizational complexity, jurisdictional boundaries, values at risk, and weather. Most indicators are common to all incidents, but some may be unique to a particular type of incident. The following are common contributing indicators of incident complexity.

Type 5 Incident Complexity Indicators

General Indicators	Span of Control Indicators
• Incident is typically terminated or concluded (objective met) within a short time once resources arrive on scene. • For incidents managed for resource objectives, minimal staffing/oversight is required. • Resources vary from two to six firefighters. • Formal Incident Planning Process not needed. • Written Incident Action Plan (IAP) not needed. • Minimal effects to population immediately surrounding the incident. • Critical Infrastructure, or Key Resources, not adversely affected.	• Incident Commander (IC) position filled. • Single resources are directly supervised by the IC. • Command and General Staff positions not needed to reduce workload or span of control.

Type 4 Incident Complexity Indicators

General Indicators	Span of Control Indicators
• Incident objectives are typically met within one operational period once resources arrive on scene, but resources may remain on scene for multiple operational periods. • Multiple resources may be needed. • Resources may require limited logistical support. • Formal Incident Planning Process not needed. • Written Incident Action Plan (IAP) not needed. • Limited effects to population surrounding incident. • Critical Infrastructure or Key Resources may be adversely affected, but mitigation measures are uncomplicated and can be implemented within one Operational Period. • Elected and appointed governing officials, stakeholder groups, and political organizations require little or no interaction.	• IC role filled. • Resources either directly supervised by the IC or supervised through an ICS Leader position. • Task Forces or Strike Teams may be used to reduce span of control to an acceptable level. • Command Staff positions normally not filled to reduce workload or span of control. • General Staff position(s) normally not filled to reduce workload or span of control.

Type 3 Incident Complexity Indicators*

General Indicators	Span of Control Indicators
• Incident typically extends into multiple operational periods. • Incident objectives usually not met within the first or second operational period. • Resources may need to remain at scene for multiple operational periods, requiring logistical support. • Numerous kinds and types of resources may be required. • Formal Incident Planning Process is initiated and followed. • Written Incident Action Plan (IAP) needed for each Operational Period. • Responders may range up to 200 total personnel. • Incident may require an Incident Base to provide support. • Population surrounding incident affected. • Critical Infrastructure or Key Resources may be adversely affected and actions to mitigate effects may extend into multiple Operational Periods. • Elected and appointed governing officials, stakeholder groups, and political organizations require some level of interaction.	• IC role filled. • Numerous resources supervised indirectly through the establishment and expansion of the Operations Section and its subordinate positions. • Division Supervisors, Group Supervisors, Task Forces, and Strike Teams used to reduce span of control to an acceptable level. • Command Staff positions may be filled to reduce workload or span of control. • General Staff position(s) may be filled to reduce workload or span of control. • ICS functional units may need to be filled to reduce workload.

*If multiple Type 3 Incident Complexity Indicators are exceeded, consider the next level of incident management support.

Source: *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, Appendix F*