

# ***ICS In Action***

**Using the Incident Command  
System in Public Health  
Outbreak Investigations**

*Produced in  
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# Introduction

Welcome to *ICS in Action: Using the Incident Command System in Public Health Outbreak Investigations*, a training program from the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness (NCCPHP) at the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health. This training is designed to help public health professionals at the local level integrate use of the Incident Command System (ICS) into a common public health department activity: investigating a disease outbreak.

## Program Objectives

At the end of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Describe how ICS can benefit disease outbreak investigations undertaken by local public health department staff.
2. Use appropriate ICS terminology to describe the roles and tasks that public health staff assume in an outbreak investigation.
3. Give examples of the ICS steps taken in outbreak investigations.
4. *For a hypothetical disease outbreak:* Demonstrate the ability to develop an Incident Action Plan, carry out an operational briefing, and formulate positions and an organizational chart for how an outbreak response might be organized.

## Training Audience

This training is intended for staff at small to medium-sized rural local health departments, but may also be useful for staff at larger health departments. The training may be particularly useful for organizational units that are responsible for investigation and management of disease outbreaks (e.g., epidemiology teams, epidemiology rapid response teams, outbreak investigation teams).

## Prerequisites

The prerequisites for this training are completion of ICS trainings 100, 200, and 700 and training or experience in disease outbreak investigation. In addition, completion of ICS 300 is strongly recommended for persons who might serve as Command Staff or General Staff.

- You may access ICS 100 (now called IS-100.a), IS-200.a, and IS-700.a at the FEMA Web site, [www.training.fema.gov](http://www.training.fema.gov).
- ICS 300 is a state-administered program available through your state's emergency management agency: <http://www.fema.gov/about/contact/statedr.shtm>.

## Program Format

*ICS in Action* is presented in 2 modules and takes approximately 2 ½ hours to complete. The training may be conducted in a single session or 2 shorter sessions

Module 1 provides a review of the core concepts of ICS in public health followed by an example of ICS as it was used by local health departments during an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness in a rural area. Module 2 walks you through a case study scenario using ICS during a hypothetical disease outbreak investigation. Throughout the training are activities that allow you to test your knowledge and practice skills.

This training can be implemented in 2 ways:

1. **Small group training session** (*recommended approach*) facilitated by a training coordinator or other staff person in face-to-face training sessions with up to 20 people. (Note: The facilitator does NOT have to have previous ICS experience in an actual incident. See the **Facilitator's Guide** for more information.)
2. **Self-paced training** when small group training is not available or if self-paced instruction is preferred.

The materials and resources associated with this training package are:

1. **Training Program Video** (order the DVD by emailing [nccphp@unc.edu](mailto:nccphp@unc.edu) OR view online at [http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics\\_in\\_action](http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action))
2. **Participant Workbook** with 7 activities
3. **Facilitator's Guide** for small group training
4. **Web Page** with additional ICS resources for further study (visit [http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics\\_in\\_action](http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action))

This training program requires one of the following:

- DVD player and TV monitor *OR*
- Computer with DVD drive and speakers (and LCD projector if using with group)

## Instructions for Using This Training Package

### **For small group training (recommended approach):**

#### *Before the training:*

1. Acquire the **Training Program Video** and equipment described above.
2. The person facilitating the training program should follow the instructions in the **Facilitator's Guide**, which may be downloaded from [http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics\\_in\\_action](http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action).
3. Print copies for each participant of the **Participant Workbook**, which may be downloaded from [http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics\\_in\\_action](http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action).

### **For self-paced training:**

#### *Before the training:*

1. Acquire the training program DVD and equipment described above
2. Print a copy of the **Participant Workbook**, which may be downloaded from [http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics\\_in\\_action](http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action).

#### *During the training:*

3. Review the Module 1 Overview in the **Workbook**.
4. Start the **Training Program Video**. Stop the video when instructed to complete Module 1 Activities 1-3. Restart the video after each activity is complete.
5. After completing Module 1, participants may take a break between modules or complete the remainder of the program in a separate training session.
6. Review the Module 2 Overview in the **Workbook**.
7. Start the **Training Program Video**. Stop the video when instructed to complete Module 2 Activities 4-7. Restart the video after each activity is complete.

#### *After the training:*

8. Complete the training program evaluation found in the **Workbook**.
9. Find resources for further study on the *ICS in Action* resources **Web Page** at [http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics\\_in\\_action](http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/trainingpackages/ics_in_action).

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This program was developed in partnership with North Carolina Public Health Regional Surveillance Team 6 (PHRST 6), 1 of 7 teams in North Carolina that work with the state Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response to prepare for, respond to, and conduct surveillance for bioterrorism and other public health threats. PHRST 6 is based in Buncombe County and serves the 19 westernmost counties of North Carolina and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

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