



CALIFORNIA TRAINING OFFICERS

December 18, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

The Training Officers Branch of the California Fire Chiefs Association is formally requesting that S-420: Command and General Staff be reinstated in the California State Fire Training course catalog. This course plays a critical role in the professional development and credentialing of California fire service personnel and its availability is essential for meeting current and future operational needs. The Training Officers hope to have S420 reinstated by March 2026, as we are planning to offer the course at the Fresno Training Symposium, March 16-20.

Here are several key reasons supporting this request:

- **CICCS Requirement:** The California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) mandates completion of S-420 to initiate a number of Position Task Books (PTBs), making it a critical course to obtain qualification.
- **Limited Availability:** Currently, CAL FIRE only offers C-420 to CAL FIRE employees or sponsored Incident Management Team (IMT) members.
- **Access Challenges for Local Government Employees:** Local government personnel can only attend the course through CAL FIRE if they are part of an IMT and sponsored by CAL FIRE, limiting access to non IMT members.
- **Prerequisite for Command and General Staff Positions:** For most Command and General Staff positions—excluding Liaison Officer—completion of S-420 or C-420 is required to open the respective PTBs.
- **Updated Certification Requirements:** The 2025 California Incident Command Certification Guide, approved on May 9, 2025, stipulates that individuals opening PTBs after June 30, 2025, must adhere to its updated requirements, which include S-420.
- **Fresno Training Symposium Course Offering:** CalChiefs Training Officers plans to offer S420 at the 2026 Fresno Training Symposium March 16-20. We would like to offer the course in alignment with SFT certification.

Given these considerations, the Training Officer branch of California Fire Chiefs Associations urges State Fire Training to consider adding S-420 back into the course catalog to ensure that California's fire service professionals have equitable access to the training necessary for their roles and responsibilities.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important, time sensitive matter. We would be happy to provide any additional information or support needed to facilitate this request.

Sincerely,

Steven Airey

Secretary, CalChiefs Training Officers



S-420 Introduction

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities and duties of each Command and General Staff position.
- Demonstrate skills to establish and maintain a positive team climate.
- Utilize various communication strategies to develop a common operating picture.
- Demonstrate critical thinking, decision making, and risk management skills.
- Demonstrate a practical understanding of the Incident Management Operational and Strategic Planning Processes.
- Demonstrate the ability to perform as a Command and General Staff member on a Type 2 IMT simulation.

Course at a Glance:

| Units | Method | Duration |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Keynote and Course Introduction | Presentation and Keynote | 1 Hour |
| Unit 1: Team Development | Presentation, Video, and Exercise | 2 Hours |
| Unit 2: Team Identity | Presentation and Group Activity | 1 Hour |
| Unit 3: Functional Area Wisdom | Discussion, Exercise, and Q&A | 2 Hours 30 Minutes |
| Unit 4: Communication | Exercise and Presentation | 1 Hour |
| Unit 5: Incident Management Planning Processes | Exercise and Presentation | 1 Hour 30 Minutes |
| Unit 6: Understanding the Situation | Presentation and Discussion | 1 Hour |
| Unit 7: Conflict Management | Exercise and Presentation | 1 Hour |
| Unit 8: Determining Goals and Objectives | Exercise and Presentation | 1 Hour 30 Minutes |
| Unit 9: Risk Management | Presentation | 1 Hour |



| Units | Method | Duration |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unit 10: Critical Thinking and Decision-Making | Presentation, Videos, and Exercise | 1 Hour 30 Minutes |
| Unit 11: Plan Development | Presentation and Cadre Role Play | 1 Hour |
| Unit 12: Plan Preparation, Review and Approval | Presentation | 1 Hour 30 Minutes |
| Unit 13: Transition and Transfer of Command | Presentation | 1 Hour |
| Unit 14: Multi-Agency Coordination, Incident Support Organizations, and Partners | Presentation and Optional Video | 1 Hour |
| Unit 15: Mentoring and Recruitment | Exercise and Presentation | 1 Hour |
| Unit 16: Panel Discussion | Panel Discussion | 1 Hour |
| Simulation | | 13 Hours 30 Minutes |
| Coach Time – Rubric Review | | 3 Hours |
| Total Course Duration | | 38 Hours |

Materials:

- Handouts:
 - Agenda

Classroom

- Ability to display images and video on large screen.
- White board or easel access for group breakout.
- *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205, <https://www.nwcg.gov/glossary/a-z>.

Guides and Key

The presentations and instructor guides include notes to aid facilitators in instruction.

Key

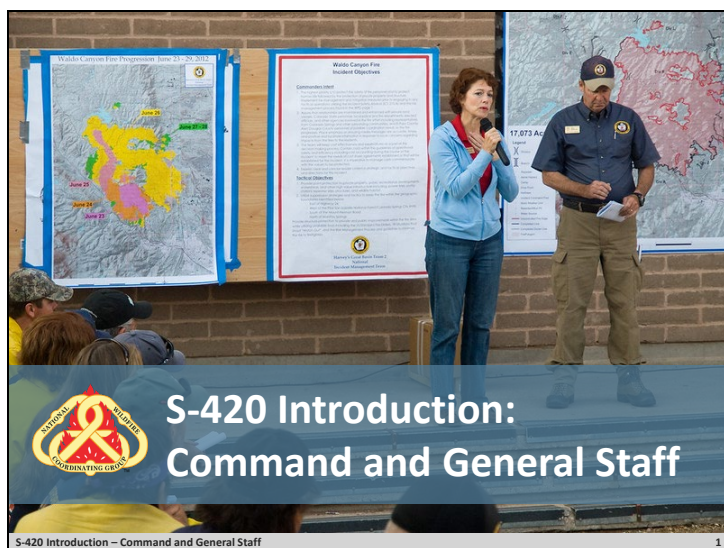
- ☐ Indicates an action for the instructor to take.
- Indicates topics and information for the facilitator to use as they see fit.

Discussion

- Facilitate a small or large group discussion using the activity and discussion questions.

Introduction

Slide 1



Keynote Address (15-20 minutes)

- ☐ Consider having a fire leader (agency lead, regional fire director, Agency Administrator, etc.) give this keynote. Keynote presents, from their perspective, and personal experience, the importance of participating in Type 2 IMTs and how these teams support the Cohesive Strategy and National Incident Management efforts. Potential topics include:
 - How has fire and fire management changed since you began your career?
 - What challenges will the students face?
 - How can the students contribute to addressing these challenges today and into the future?
 - How can S-420 prepare students to perform on a Type 2 C&G?

Introduction

Slide 2

Course Goal

- The goal of the course is to assist in the development of effective Command and General Staff members on Type 2 Incident Management Teams (IMT).
- This course is not about how well an individual performs in a specific functional position; it is about how well an individual functions as a team member.

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- ☐ Review course goals.

Slide 3

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities and duties of each Command and General Staff position.
- Demonstrate skills to establish and maintain a positive team climate.
- Utilize various communication strategies to develop a common operating picture.

- ☐ Review course objectives.

Slide 4

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking, decision making, and risk management skills.
- Demonstrate a practical understanding of the Incident Management Operational and Strategic Planning Processes.
- Demonstrate the ability to perform as a Command and General Staff member on a Type 2 IMT simulation.

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- ☐ Review course objectives.

Slide 5

Course Overview

- **Agenda**
- **Pre-course work**
 - The Student Self-Assessment and Feedback Rubric is part of the required pre-course work.
 - The intent of the pre-course work is to increase knowledge of each C&G position responsibilities.
 - Throughout the course, there will be discussions and activities related to the pre-course work.
 - The SOPs for Student IMTs from the pre-course work will be used in the simulation.

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Agenda

- ☐ Hand out and review agenda with students.

Pre-course Work

- ☐ Encourage students to use their pre-course work notes on C&G positions throughout the week.

Discussion

- ☐ Coaches are encouraged to create opportunities to discuss this self-assessment with their students.

Slide 6

Evaluating Student Performance

- Student Self-Assessment and Feedback Rubric is used for student evaluation.
- Students will be evaluated on ability to operate as a team member.

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- It is important for every student to understand the rubric.
- It should be clear to students that they are being evaluated on their ability to operate as a team member, not on their ability to perform the duties of a given position.
- Adults learn through self-reflection and feedback. Effective coaches develop relationships with their students where feedback is recognized as a sincere effort to improve performance.
- ☐ Coaches will lead a short discussion about how they will utilize the Rubric as a framework for feedback throughout the course.

Introduction

Slide 7

Course Overview

- **Student teams will:**
 - Work in an assigned group throughout the course.
 - Function as an IMT, with assigned position roles.
 - Have coaches assigned to work with the teams.

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Notes to Instructor

Prior to the course, organize students into groups of eight. Efforts should be made to distribute experience, functional area background, agency affiliation, etc. to make teams relatively equal.

- Students will function in the following position roles during the Simulation:
 - ICT2
 - SOF2
 - OSC2
 - PSC2
 - LSC2
 - FSC2
 - PIO2
 - LOFR
- There is the possibility of rotating to different positions within the team.
 - The students will work as a team to determine position assignments in Unit 1.
 - At least one coach will work with each team. The coaches will facilitate discussions and exercises and serve as subject matter experts for all C&G positions. The coaches also completes the coach portion of the Student Self-Assessment and Feedback Rubric.