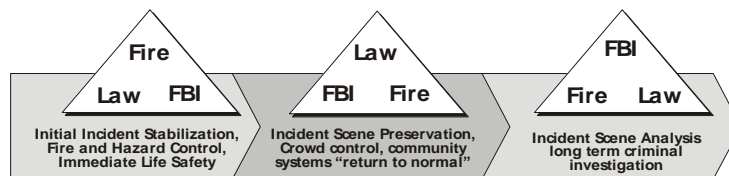


## CT: Options for Unified Command

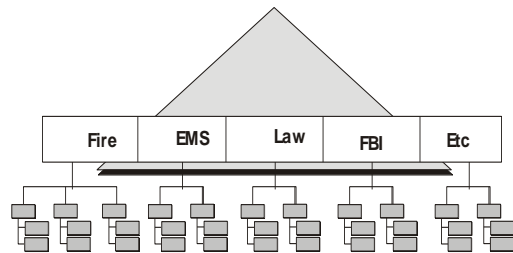
In the basic ICS/UC model, agency representatives collaborate as a team at the incident command level, resources from the different agencies are integrated and co-mingled as shared response resources, and a single authority is used for each of the sections at the strategic level (for example, the operations section will usually be headed by a qualified official from the agency with pre-eminent responsibility for the incident response).

However, agencies can collaborate in a number of other different ways to share command under a Unified Command structure. One option for unified command is to rotate lead agency responsibility within the command function. This is often used in incidents where different organizations have pre-eminent responsibilities at different stages of the incident. For example, in a local WMD incident with a unified command team of fire/EMS, law and the FBI, fire/EMS may have the lead during initial stages of the incident for fire control, incident stabilization, rescue and treatment of victims, law enforcement may have a subsequent lead for crowd control, community stabilization, and preservation of the incident scene, and FBI may have final lead for evidence collection, scene analysis and long term investigation.

**Example: Agencies Rotating Lead in Unified Command by incident phase, Local Terrorist Incident**



Another option for agencies to share command in the Unified Command System is to share strategic decision-making as a group but to retain command over each agencies' individual resources and missions. This is often used in complex incidents where it is critical to both ensure coordination and also to exercise expert knowledge at the command level of the capabilities and deployment options for the different agencies' resources. For example, in a large emergency involving multiple fire scenes, multiple sites of casualties, and sites of rioting and looting, all operations would be coordinated at the command level but individual fire, EMS and law enforcement operations would still directed by the individual discipline command structures.



Another option for agencies to share command in the Unified Command System is to share strategic decision-making as a group but to maintain distinct command responsibilities for given geographical areas. This is often used in incidents such as wildfires that involve coordinating large scale operations over very large geographical areas that also cross many governmental jurisdictional boundaries. For example, area commands would coordinate strategies and resource allocation at the command level, but would retain direct command over resources operating within the assigned geographical area.

