*Management by Objective*: An emergency response requires incredibly clear communication, task coordination and decision making. To accomplish this, ICS uses *management by objective*: Based on **prioritized problems**, the Incident Commander sets **clear objectives**. Response leaders then turn these into **creative strategies** and **measurable tactics** in order to solve the problems.

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| Terms | Definition | Usage |
| **Objective** | Flexible, high-level action statement that specifies **what** the response must accomplish to address defined problems. Reflects the priorities of the Incident Commander to save lives, stabilize the incident and conserve property/the environment.  **Example:** Objective 1: Vaccinate at-risk population before the start of flu season | * Developed *and prioritized* by the Incident Commander and key staff based on agency policy and the current situation during the *Objectives Meeting*. * Planning Section Chief and IC ensure SMART Objectives: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction–Oriented (i.e., an action verb defines what should be accomplished), **R**ealistic, **T**ime-Sensitive. * Incident Commander and Ops Chief should perform this “litmus test”: Does each Objective map directly to a part of the response? * Objectives drive the response work, resource/staff allocation and org structure. They are re-examined every operational period. * The next operational period’s objectives are developed during the current operational period. |
| **Strategy** | General plan(s) of action that describes (in broad terms) **how** the objective will be met.  **Example:** Strategy 1: Conduct school-based vaccination for younger (ages 4-9) students. Strategy 2: Open a POD in every borough both Saturday and Sunday for 5 weekends. | * Brainstormed and proposed by the relevant Operations Section Chief and the Objective owners * Agreed on at a *Tactics Meeting* for the next operational period * Implemented by the Branch or Group Leaders who own the objective with wide latitude, close coordination, and constant information flow. * It is possible to have multiple strategies that work towards each objective. |
| **Tactic** | Specific, measurable activity that detail **how** resources will be deployed to meet the chosen strategy or strategies.  **Example:** For Obj. 1, Strategy 1:Utilize DOE’s existing translation contracts to translate materials as rapidly as possible. | * Developed by emergency response groups, teams, or single resources within those groups. Approved at *Tactics Meeting*. * Each Strategy can have many tactics. * If Objectives are specific enough, only Tactics may be needed. * Tactics are the most specific type of action tracked by ICS. Individuals are trusted to manage their own tasks. |

# Remember

Research into ICS shows that its focus on the current operational period (e.g., next twelve hours) can create strategic problems over a long term response. *Objectives, Strategies¸* and *Tactics* should always be connected to compelling overarching *Goals* for the response with clear *Priorities* for action and a defined *End State*, which is the vision for what the response is supposed to achieve.