

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The U.S. Coast Guard Incident Management Handbook (IMH) is designed to assist Coast Guard personnel in the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) during response operations. The IMH is intended to be used as an easy reference job aid for responders. It is not a policy document, but rather guidance for response personnel. During development of the IMH, it was recognized that eighty-percent of all response operations share common principles, procedures and processes. The other twenty-percent of response operations are unique to the type of incident, such as a search and rescue case or an oil spill. The handbook is laid out so that the generic information applicable to all responses is presented up-front. For example, the duties and responsibilities of the Planning Section Chief (PSC) are found in the generic section since a PSC's job description under ICS does not change from one type of incident to another. The remainder of the IMH is divided into seven types of incidents the Coast Guard is most likely to respond to. They are:

- Search and Rescue
- Law Enforcement
- Oil Spills
- Hazardous Substance Releases
- Terrorism
- Marine Fire
- Multi-Casualty

With the exception of the chapter on Terrorism (further development pending) each of the chapters that deal with a specific type of incident provides a scenario from which to illustrate how an incident starts off with only initial responders and then escalates to a large multi-agency response organization. The organization charts in each of the chapters are only **examples** of how an ICS organization may be developed to respond to that type of incident. Also, in each chapter are incident-specific job descriptions that have proven valuable in past response operations. An example of an incident-specific position would be the Vessel Disposition Group Supervisor located in the Law Enforcement chapter.

Coast Guard response personnel can come from any component of the Coast Guard (Active Duty, Reserve, Auxiliary, or Civilian Employees). Responders should have a basic understanding of ICS to ensure they can effectively operate within the ICS organization and properly use and understand this IMH.