

INTRODUCTION:

The Guidelines on the Incident Response System (IRS) are issued by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) under Section 6 of the DM Act, 2005 for effective, efficient and comprehensive management of disasters in India. The vision is to minimize loss of life and property by strengthening and standardising the disaster response mechanism in the country.

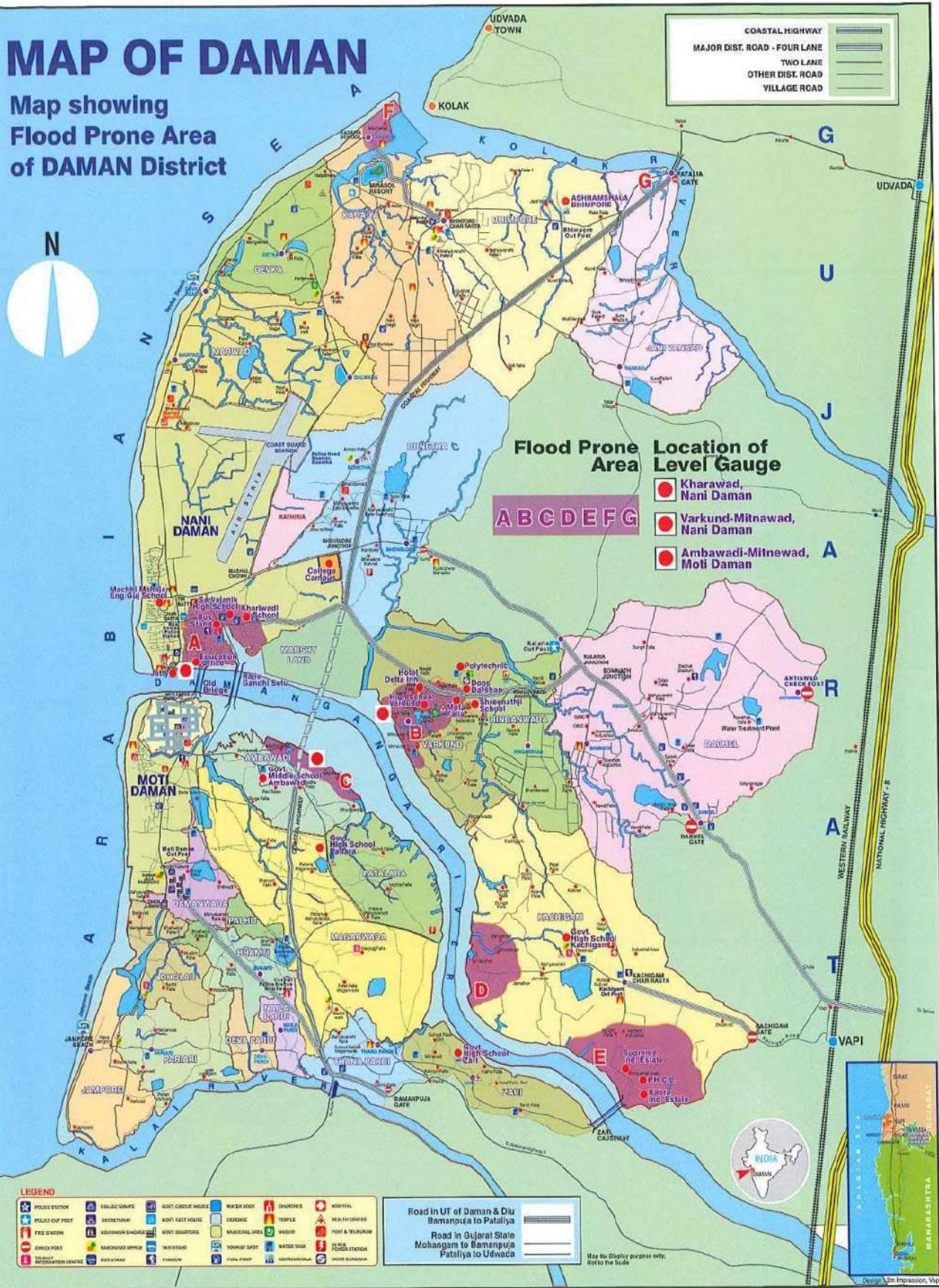
Though India has been successfully managing disasters in the past, there are still a number of shortcomings which need to be addressed. The response today has to be far more comprehensive, effective, swift and well planned based on a well conceived response mechanism.

Realisation of certain shortcomings in our response system and a desire to address the critical gaps led the Government of India (GoI) to look at the world's best practices. The GoI found that the system evolved for fire-fighting in California is very comprehensive and thus decided to adopt Incident Command System (ICS).

In view of the provisions of the DM Act, 2005, NDMA felt that authoritative Guidelines on the subject, with necessary modifications to suit the Indian administrative setup, were essential. To meet this need, a core group of experts was constituted and four regional consultation workshops were conducted. It was ensured that representatives of the State Governments and MHA participate and their views given due consideration. Training Institutes like the LBSNAA, NIDM and various RTIs / ATIs along with National core trainers also participated. The adaptation of ICS by other countries was also examined. The draft prepared was again sent to all States, UTs and their final comments were obtained and incorporated. A comprehensive set of Guidelines has thus been prepared and is called the **Incident Response System (IRS)**.

MAP OF DAMAN

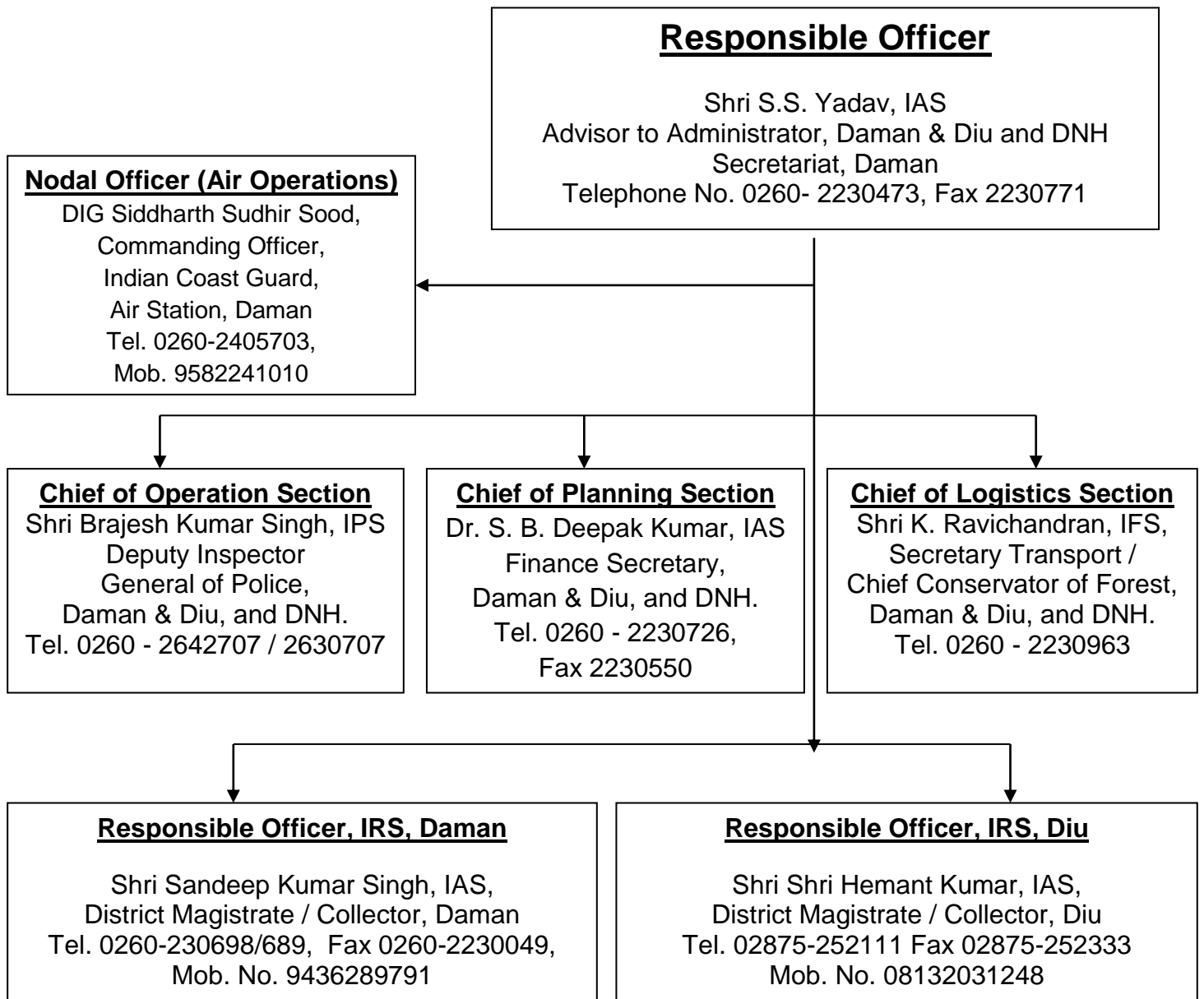
Map showing Flood Prone Area of DAMAN District



INCIDENT RESPONSE SYSTEM

DAMAN & DIU

State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA)



Incident Response System

Definition:

The Incident Response System (IRS) is an effective mechanism for reducing the scope for ad-hoc measures in response. It incorporates all the tasks that may be performed during Disaster Management irrespective of their level of complexity. It envisages a composite team with various Sections to attend to all the possible response requirements. The IRS identifies and designates officers to perform various duties and get them trained in their respective roles. If IRS is put in place and stakeholders trained and made aware of their roles, it will greatly help in reducing chaos and confusion during the response phase. Everyone will know what needs to be done, who will do it and who is in command, etc. IRS is a flexible system and all the Sections, Branches and Units need not be activated at the same time. Various Sections, Branches and Units need to be activated only as and when they are required.

IRS organization:

The IRS organisation functions through **Incident Response Teams (IRTs)** in the field. In line with our administrative structure and DM Act 2005, **Responsible Officers (ROs)** have been designated at the State / UT and District level as overall in charge of the incident response management. The RO may however delegate responsibilities to the **Incident Commander (IC)**, who in turn will manage the incident through **Incident Response Teams (IRTs)**. The IRTs will be pre-designated at all levels; State, District, Sub-Division, Village Panchayat and Village levels. On receipt of Early Warning, the RO will activate them. In case a disaster occurs without any warning, the local IRT will respond and contact RO for further support, if required. A **Nodal Officer (NO)** has to be designated for proper execution and coordination between the District, State and National level in activating air

support for response. Apart from the **Responsible Officers (ROs)** and **Nodal Officer (NO)**, the IRS has two main components:

a) Command Staff

b) General Staff

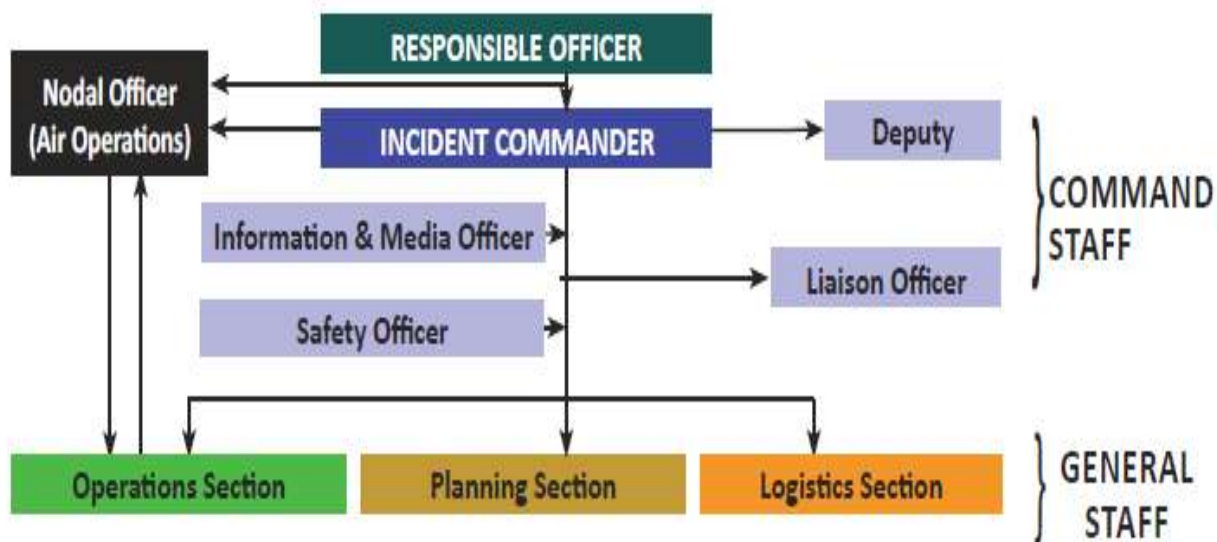


Figure-1

Command Staff

The Command Staff consists of **Incident Commander (IC)**, **Information & Media Officer (IMO)**, **Safety Officer (SO)** and **Liaison Officer (LO)**. They report directly to the **Incident Commander (IC)** and may have assistants. The Command Staff may or may not have supporting organisations under them. The main function of the Command Staff is to assist the IC in the discharge of his functions.

General Staff

The General Staff has three components which are as follows;

Operations Section (OS)

The OS is responsible for directing the required tactical actions to meet incident objectives. Management of disaster may not immediately require activation of Branch, Division and Group. Expansion of the OS depends on the enormity of the situation and number of different types and kinds of functional Groups required in the response management.

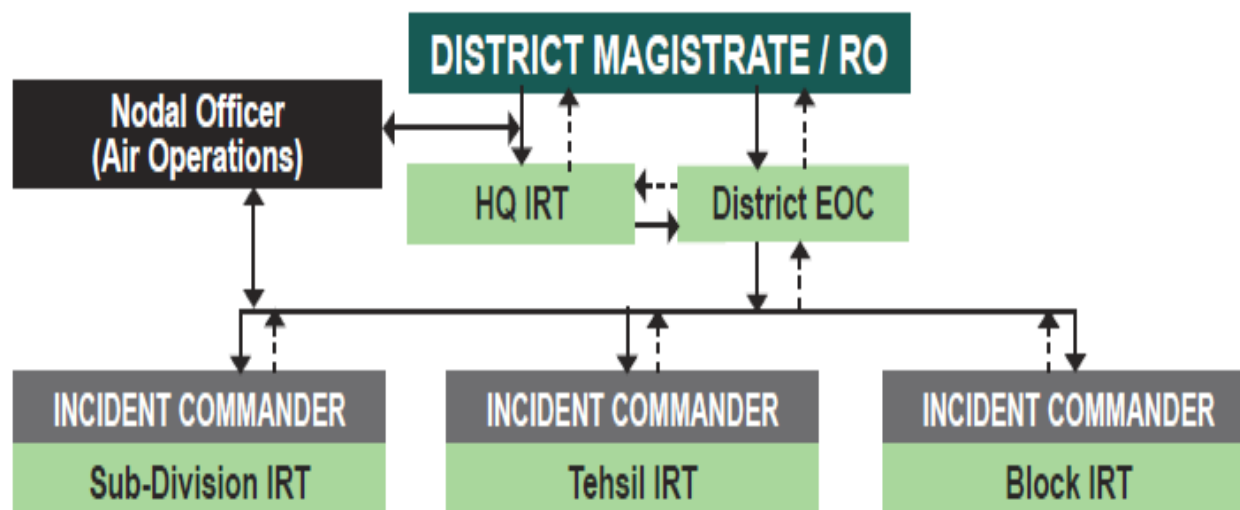
Planning Section (PS)

The PS is responsible for collection, evaluation and display of incident information, maintaining and tracking resources, preparing the **Incident Action Plan (IAP)** and other necessary incident related documentation. They will assess the requirement of additional resources, propose from where it can be mobilized and keep **Incident Commander (IC)** informed. This Section also prepares the demobilization plan.

Coordination response at the district level

The District Magistrate/DC is the head of the District administrative set up and chairperson of the DDMA as per the DM Act, 2005. He has been designated as the **Responsible Officer (RO)** in the District.

The heads of different departments in the District will have separate roles to play depending on the nature and kind of disaster. The roles and responsibilities of the members of the DDMA will be decided in advance in consultation with the concerned members. The roles of other line departments also have to be clearly delineated in various disaster situations in the District DM Plan which will be duly approved by the State Government, so that there will be no ambiguity about their functions during response and execution of task.



Roles & Responsibilities of District Magistrate as RO

The District Magistrate / RO will:

- i. Ensure that **Incident Response Teams (IRTs)** are formed at District and Village Panchayat levels and Incidence Response System (IRS) is integrated in the District Disaster Management Plan as per Section 31 of the DM Act, 2005. This may be achieved by issuing a Standing Order by the Responsible Officer to Dy. Collector, Chief Officer DMC, CEO District Panchayat, Mamlatdar/ BDO and all HOs.
- ii. Ensure web based / on line Decision Support System (DSS) is in place in Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) and connected with all village Panchayat level IRTs for support.
- iii. Ensure that toll free emergency numbers existing for Police, Fire and Medical support etc. are linked to the EOC for response, command and control. For e.g., if there is any fire incident, the information should not only reach the fire station but also the EOC and the nearest hospital to gear up the emergency medical service.
- iv. Obtain funds from centre Government as recommended by the 13th Finance Commission (Annexure –XVI) and ensure that a training calendar

for IRTs of District is prepared and members of IRTs are trained through ATIs and other training institutions of the District.

- v. Delegate authorities to the **Incidence Commander (IC)**.
- vi. Activate IRTs at District headquarter and Panchayat levels, as and when required.
- vii. Appoint / deploy, terminate and demobilise IC and IRT(s) as and when required.
- viii. Decide overall incident objectives, priorities and ensure that various objectives do not conflict with each other.
- ix. Ensure that **Incidence Action Plan(IAP)** is prepared by the **Incidence Commander (IC)** and implemented
- x. Remain fully briefed on the **IAP** and its implementation.
- xi. Coordinate all response activities.
- xii. Give directions for the release of all resources available with any department of the Government, Local Authority, private sector etc. in the District
- xiii. Ensure that **local Armed Forces Commanders** are involved in the planning process and their resources are appropriately dovetailed, if required.
- xiv. Ensure that when Armed Forces arrive in support for disaster response, their logistic requirements like camping grounds, potable water, electricity and requirement of vehicles etc. are sorted out;
- xv. Appoint a **Nodal Officer** at the District level to organise Air Operations in coordination with the Central Government **Nodal Officer**. Also ensure that **all ICs of IRTs of the District are aware of it.**
- xvi. Ensure that the **NGOs, local fisheries organisation and others** carry out their activities in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner.
- xvii. Deploy the District Headquarter **IRTs** at the incident site, in case of need
- xviii. Ensure that effective communications are in place;

- xix. Ensure that telephone directory of all stakeholders is prepared and available with EOC and members of IRTs.
- xx. Ensure provision for accountability of personnel and a safe operating environment.
- xxi. In case the situation deteriorates, the RO may assume the role of the IC and may seek support from the State level **Responsible Officer (RO)**.
- xxii. Mobilise experts and consultants in the relevant fields to advise and assist as he may deem necessary.
- xxiii. Procure exclusive or preferential use of amenities from any authority or person.
- xxiv. Conduct post response review on performance of IRTs and take appropriate steps to improve performance.
- xxv. Take other necessary action as the situation demands.