

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

A Crisis Management Pre-Plan In Action

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Drew Leemon
NOLS Director of Risk Management
drew_leemon@nols.edu
www.nols.edu

METHOD

- Overview of NOLS crisis response and management
- Scenario
- Administrative Response
- Forum for discussion

DEFINITIONS

- **Crisis:** An event that is, or has potential to be, a turning point in the organization. A crisis may overwhelm the organization's available staff and resources and impact its ability to operate.
- **Emergency:** An event that may require urgent response but is within the scope of the organization's resources and does not threaten its ability to operate.

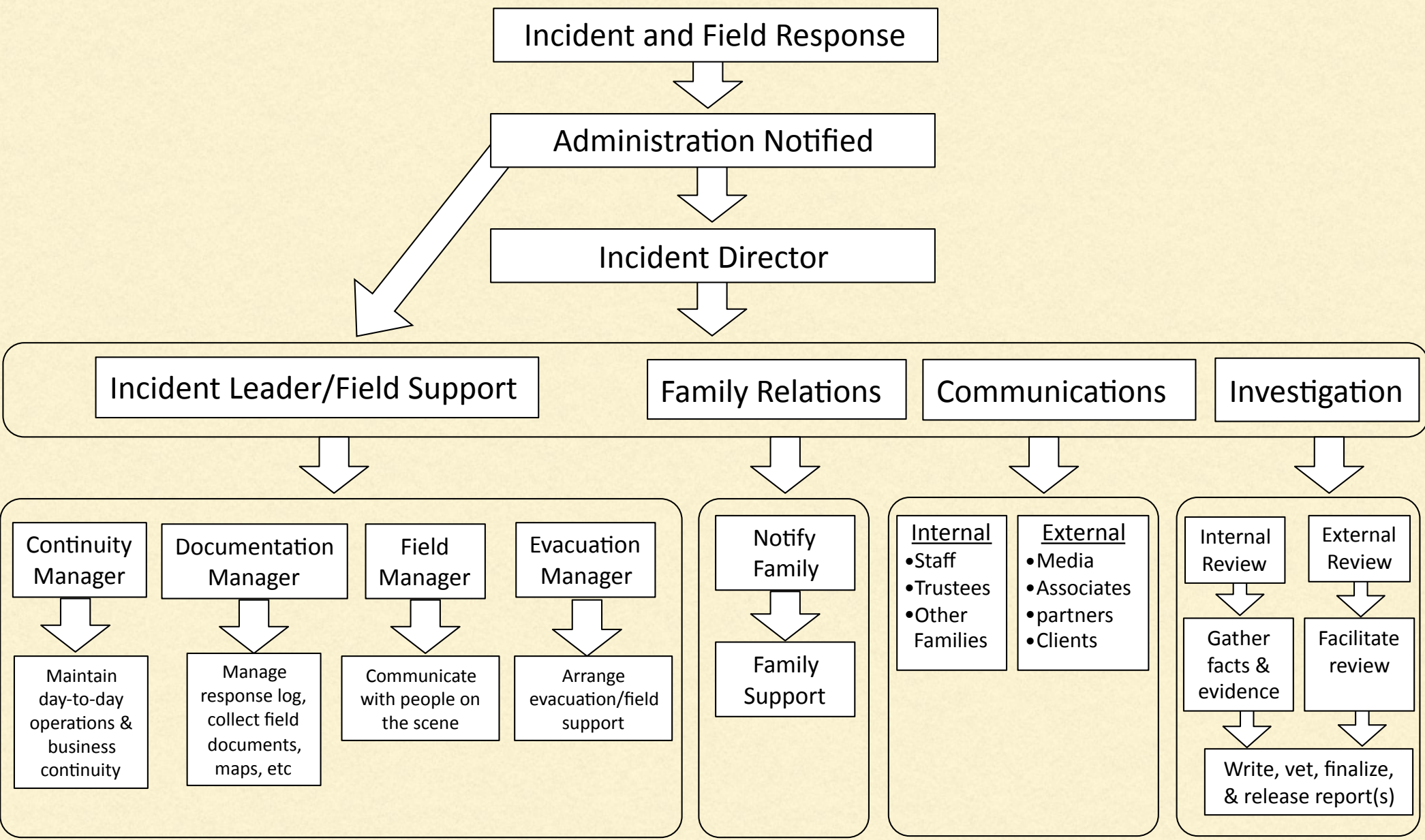
NOLS CRISIS CASES

- 1989: Fatality, Wyoming, mountaineering
- 1992: Fatality, Wyoming, avalanche
- 1996: Fatality, Wyoming, river crossing
- 1999: Fatality, Alaska, glacier travel
- 2011: Injury, Alaska, grizzly bear attack
- 2011: Fatality, India, backpacking

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

- Provides guidance for your response and management
- Many things happen at once
- Prioritize tasks and actions and deploy resources

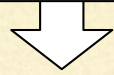
NOLS Crisis Management Schematic



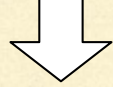
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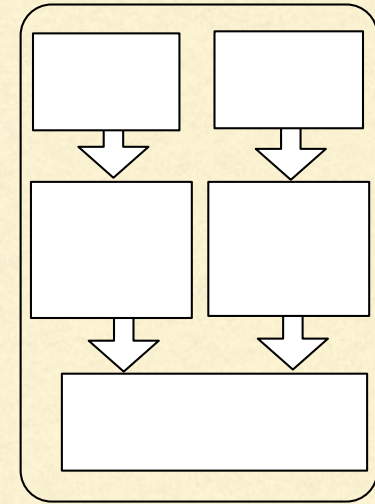
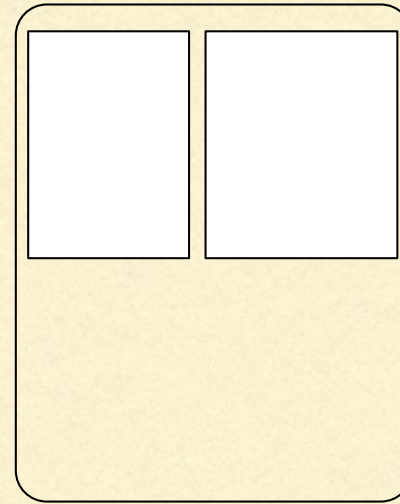
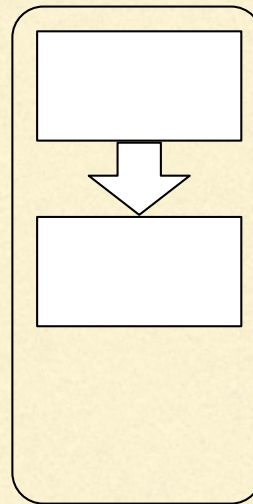
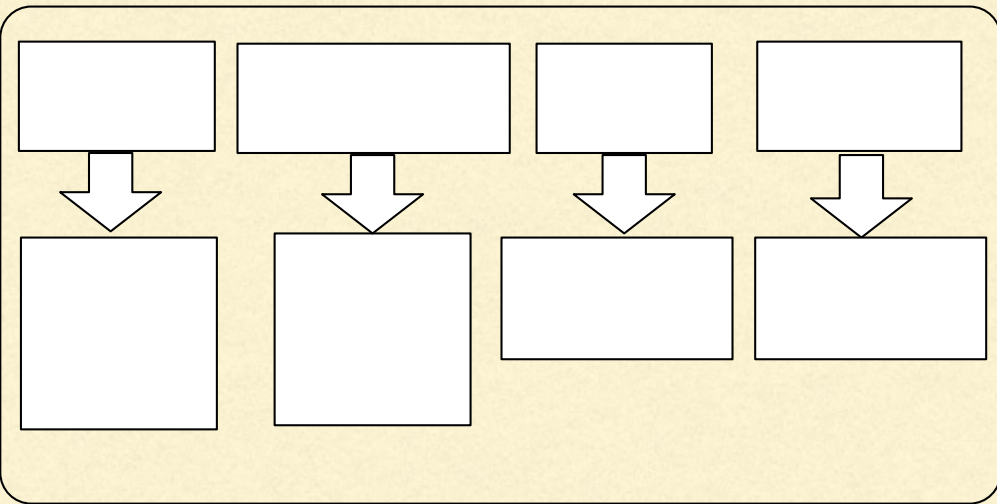
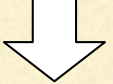
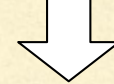
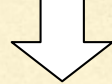
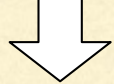
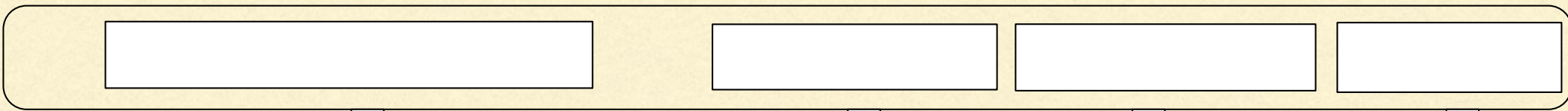
Incident and Field Response



Administration Notified



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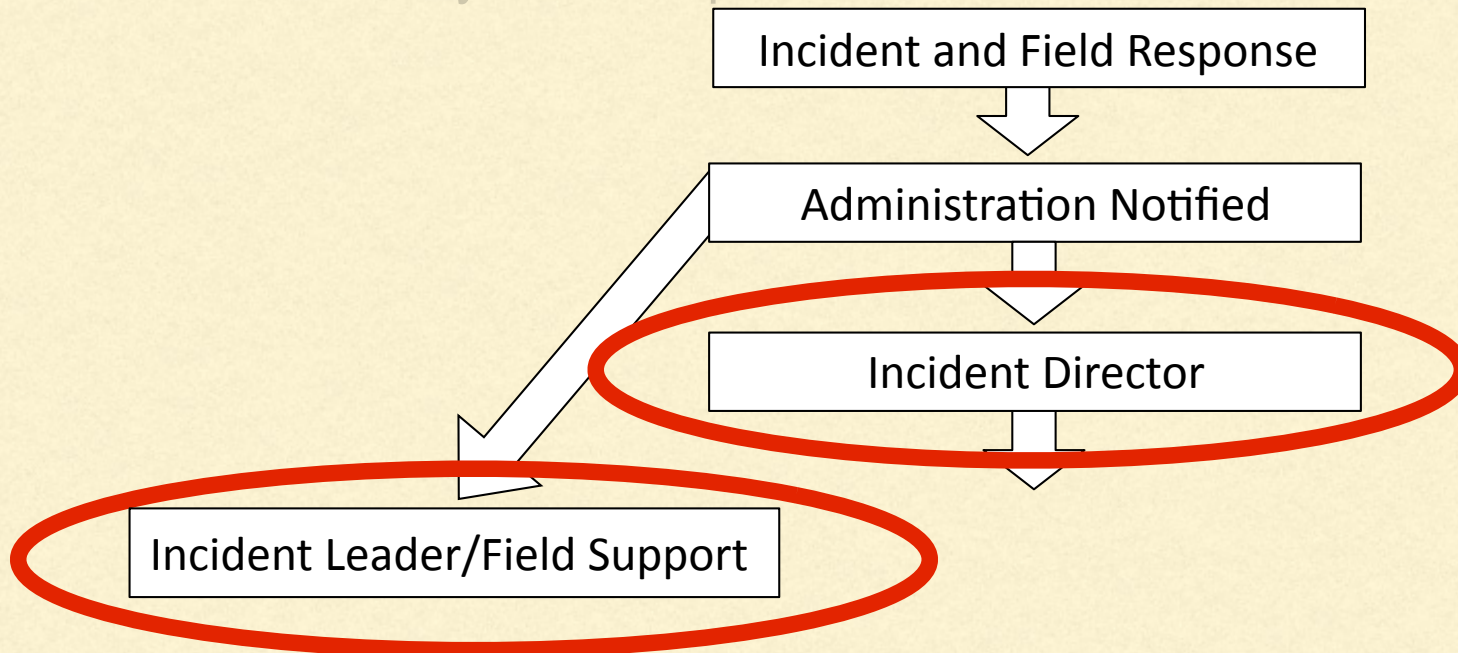


AN INCIDENT OCCURS

Day one

- 6:30 p.m. Friday, July 28
 - The on call emergency contact person receives an emergency satellite phone call from an instructor that there has been a fatality on ABW 7/2 and she provides latitude & longitude coordinates
 - The connection is poor and suddenly cut off
- **What happens next?**
 - **What are the immediate first actions to take?**



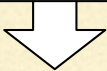


LEADERSHIP

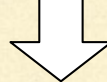
Incident Director & Leader

- Organize team structure
- Establish objectives and priorities
- Communicate among teams
- Develop contingencies
- Make/facilitate decisions
- Determine course continuation options
- Assemble personnel resources
- Assign roles and responsibilities
- Plan for long duration response
- Knowledge of law enforcement, SAR, investigation requirements
- Knowledge of land agency requirements

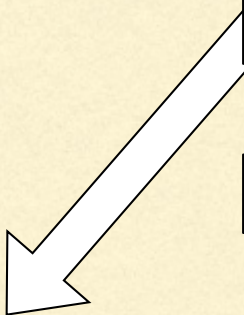
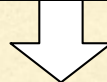
Incident and Field Response



Administration Notified



Incident Director



Incident Leader/Field Support

Family Relations

Communications

Investigation

OUR STORY CONTINUES

All we know is

- Which group it is
- Their location (twelve miles into the wilderness in a river valley)

Immediate questions that need answers are:

- Who is the deceased?
- What happened?
- What additional support is needed?
- How will we communicate?

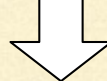
What are your next steps?



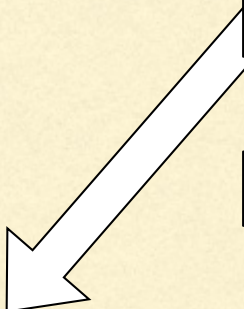
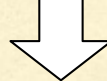
Incident and Field Response



Administration Notified



Incident Director

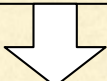


Incident Leader/Field Support

Family Relations

Communications

Investigation



Continuity
Manager

Maintain
day-to-day
operations &
business
continuity

Documentation
Manager

Manage
response log,
collect field
documents,
maps, etc

Field
Manager

Communicate
with people on
the scene

Evacuation
Manager

Arrange
evacuation/field
support

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did

- Established satellite phone contact
- We learn:
 - Her name
 - She died that morning during a river crossing
 - She was a member of a five person hiking group
 - Everyone else is OK
 - The group is now camped near the body
 - A runner party left earlier in the day for a road head 12 miles away
 - Want to end the course early

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did

- Began arrangements for a ground team to hike in
- Notified the sheriff's office
- Contacted a horse packer
- Contacted four helicopter companies
- Got permission to land in wilderness
- Organized additional supplies: food, fuel, phones, and batteries

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did

- That evening a helicopter arrived and landed
- Body was taken to a town 250 miles away
- Sheriff's deputy investigation in morning
- Two staff prepared to fly in to hike out with group
- Runner party arrived at road head, NOLS vehicle and driver waiting

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did

Day two (first full day following notification)

- Deputy and staff flew into course
- Deputy returns and briefed staff on situation
- Continued to support other courses (about 25)

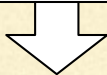
FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did

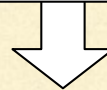
Day three & four (second and third full day after notification)

- Course came out late afternoon
- Psychological stress discussion next morning
- Counseling available for students and staff
- Normal end of course tasks
- Group activities for students

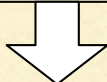
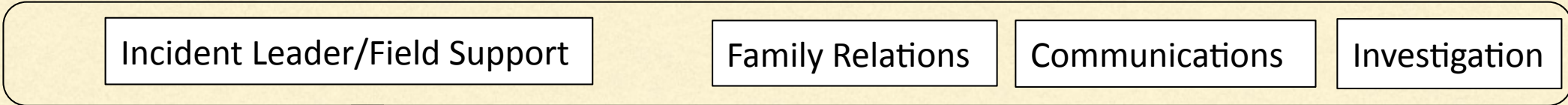
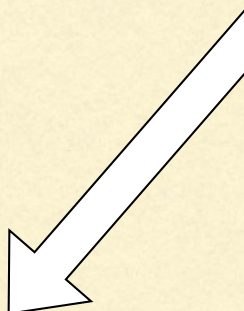
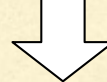
Incident and Field Response



Administration Notified



Incident Director



Continuity
Manager

Documentation
Manager

Field
Manager

Evacuation
Manager

Maintain
day-to-day
operations &
business
continuity

Manage
response log,
collect field
documents,
maps, etc

Communicate
with people on
the scene

Arrange
evacuation/field
support



OUR STORY CONTINUES

- We know who the deceased is
- We need to notify the family
 - **How is the family contacted?**
 - **Who informs them?**
 - **What factors are considered?**



FAMILY RELATIONS

What we did

- Executive director (or acting) telephoned family
- Organized, compassionate, and caring
- Sample script

Hello. Mr./Ms _____ I am _____ (title) _____ from NOLS. _____ (name of student) was _____ (hit by rock/fell/in an accident) while on their NOLS course. I am terribly sorry to have to tell you that _____ (name) (died/was seriously injured).

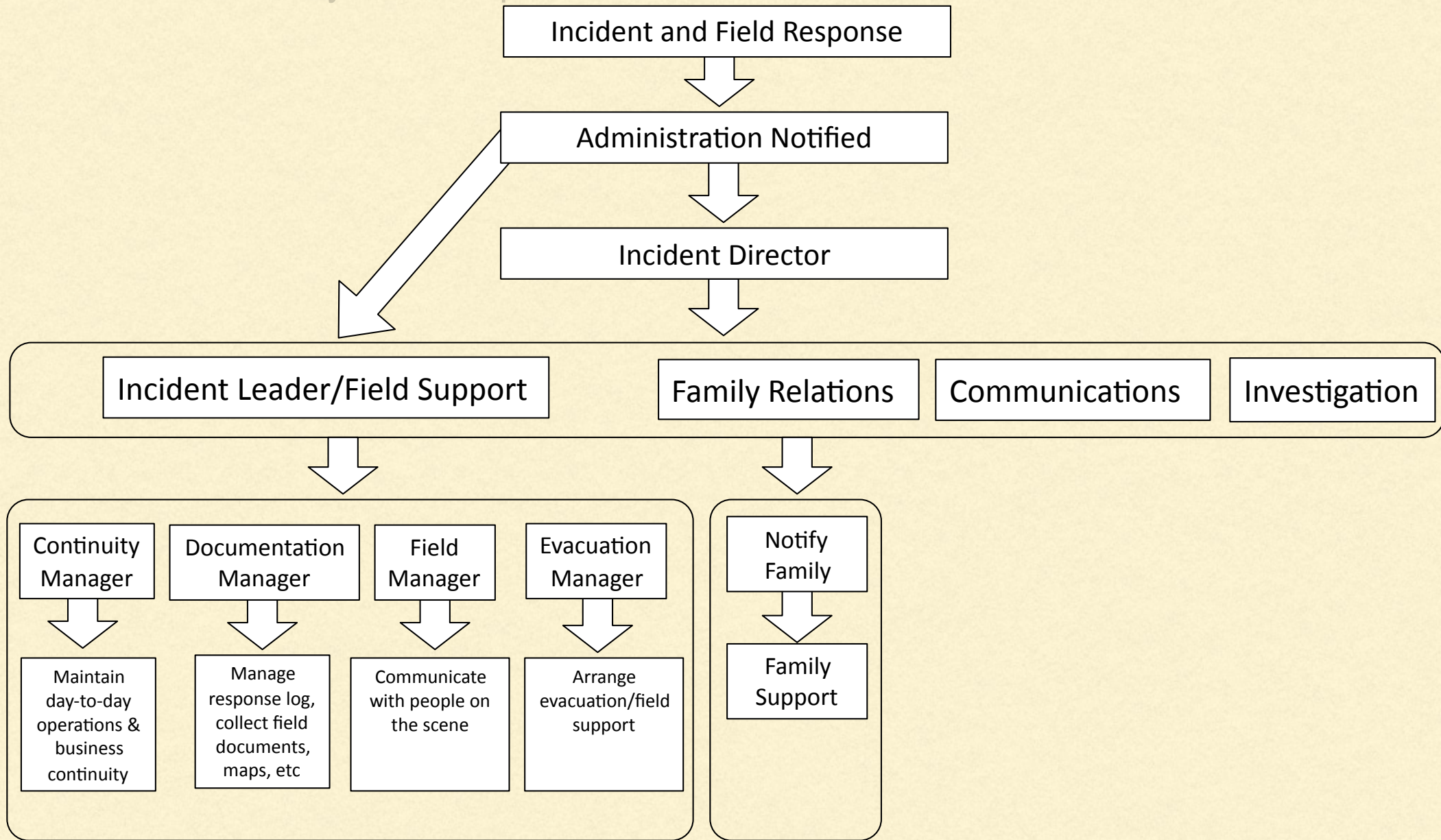
FAMILY RELATIONS

What we did

- Designated family liaison (consider divorced parents)
- The parents could not come to Lander
- Issues of family members at location
- Family interaction with students and staff
- Family members visit incident site
- Grief counselors, clergy, or therapists

FAMILY RELATIONS

- Ask if organizational representative can attend funeral or memorial
- Stay in regular contact with family
- Stay in touch with other course members.



OUR STORY CONTINUES

- Word spreads fast
- Who needs to be informed?
- We only have basic information of what happened

OUR STORY CONTINUES

- **How is communication managed?**
 - **What is important?**
 - **What do you need to watch out for?**
 - **How would you manage communication?**



COMMUNICATION

What we did

- External and internal audiences
- Assigned one person as leader for each group

- External audiences

media

law enforcement

land agencies

peer organizations

- Internal audiences

trustees

insurance

families of other students

directors

instructors

other staff

COMMUNICATION

What we did

- Factual statement
 - Who, what, when, where
 - Wrote a press release
 - Posted it on website
 - Provided it to media

For immediate release

*date
time*

Contact:

*person's name
phone #*

NOLS Headquarters

Concise Descriptive Headline

LANDER, Wyo.—One sentence with age, where from, how died/injured where incident occurred and date.

Ed Wild, of (town, state) was on a 30-day backpacking trip with the National Outdoor Leadership School when he was (struck by rock or slipped and drowned or struck by lightning).

Provide a brief description of NOLS response including efforts to get the body out, NOLS emergency response system, evacuation method, how remote incident site was, authorities that helped or were contacted.

“We are deeply saddened by this tragedy,” said _____ (*name*), Executive Director for NOLS. “We do not know details at this point because the course has not come out of the field, but we’re working to find out all we can. Our thoughts and sympathy are with the family and we remain in close contact with them.”

NOLS was founded in 1965 by legendary mountaineer Paul Petzoldt. Since then, over 85,000 students have graduated from NOLS, which teaches leadership, teamwork, environmental ethics, and wilderness technical skills.

NOLS
284 Lincoln Street
Lander, WY 82520
(307) 332-8800
Fax (307) 332-8811

COMMUNICATION - EXTERNAL

What we did

- Media
 - internet/social media
 - television
 - print
 - radio

COMMUNICATION - EXTERNAL

What we did

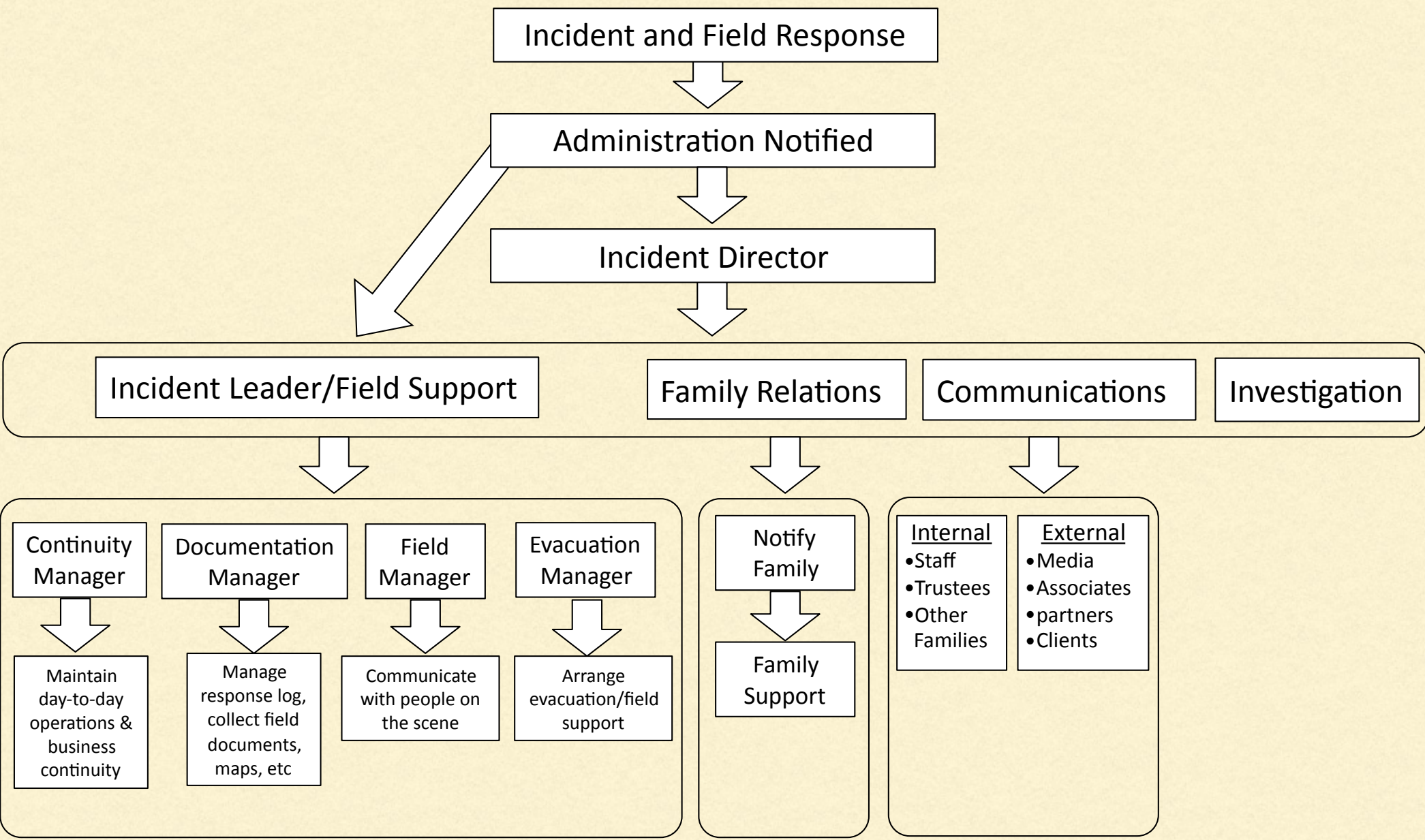
- Factually accurate
- Short lived story
- Media spokesperson
- Media interviews
 - Onsite
 - Skype
 - Blog comment features
- Watched for erroneous information
- Kept records of all media stories

COMMUNICATION - INTERNAL

What we did

- Informed other NOLS schools and staff in town
 - Limit use of email
 - Held all staff meeting
 - Watch for judging of incident
- Sent letters to staff in field
- Called each family of other course members
- Follow up communication post event

NOLS Crisis Management Schematic



INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

- We need more information
- Need facts to assess our legal exposure
- Need facts to prevent rumors
- We really want to understand what happened
- **How would you get additional information and investigate the incident?**



INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

Three phases of investigation and documentation

1. Field
2. Administrative
3. Incident review

INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

What we did Field

- Witnesses
 - Just the facts (who, what, when, & where)
 - Written accounts by leaders
- Evidence, photos, sketches
- Site visit

INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

Three phases of investigation and documentation

1. Field
2. Administrative
3. Incident review

INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

What we did Administrative

- Student factual interviews
- Staff factual interviews
- Course records
- Other information sources

INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

What we did Administrative

- Incident accounts
- Field evacuation report
- Weather reports/logs
- Maps & descriptions
- Student journals
- Travel plans
- Field safety report
- Course log(s)
- Instruction checklist
- Photos and diagrams
- Student file(s)
- Contact logs w/family
- Contact log w/media

INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

Three phases of investigation and documentation

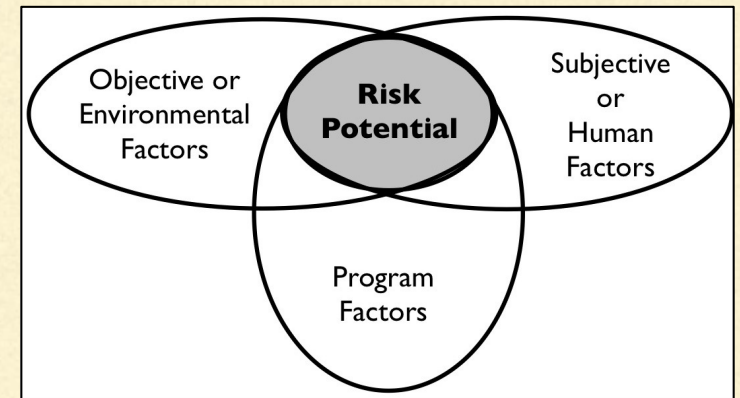
1. Field
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3. Incident review

INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

What we did Review

Internal review

- Captured the story
- Analysis
- Conclusion
- Recommendations for change (if any)



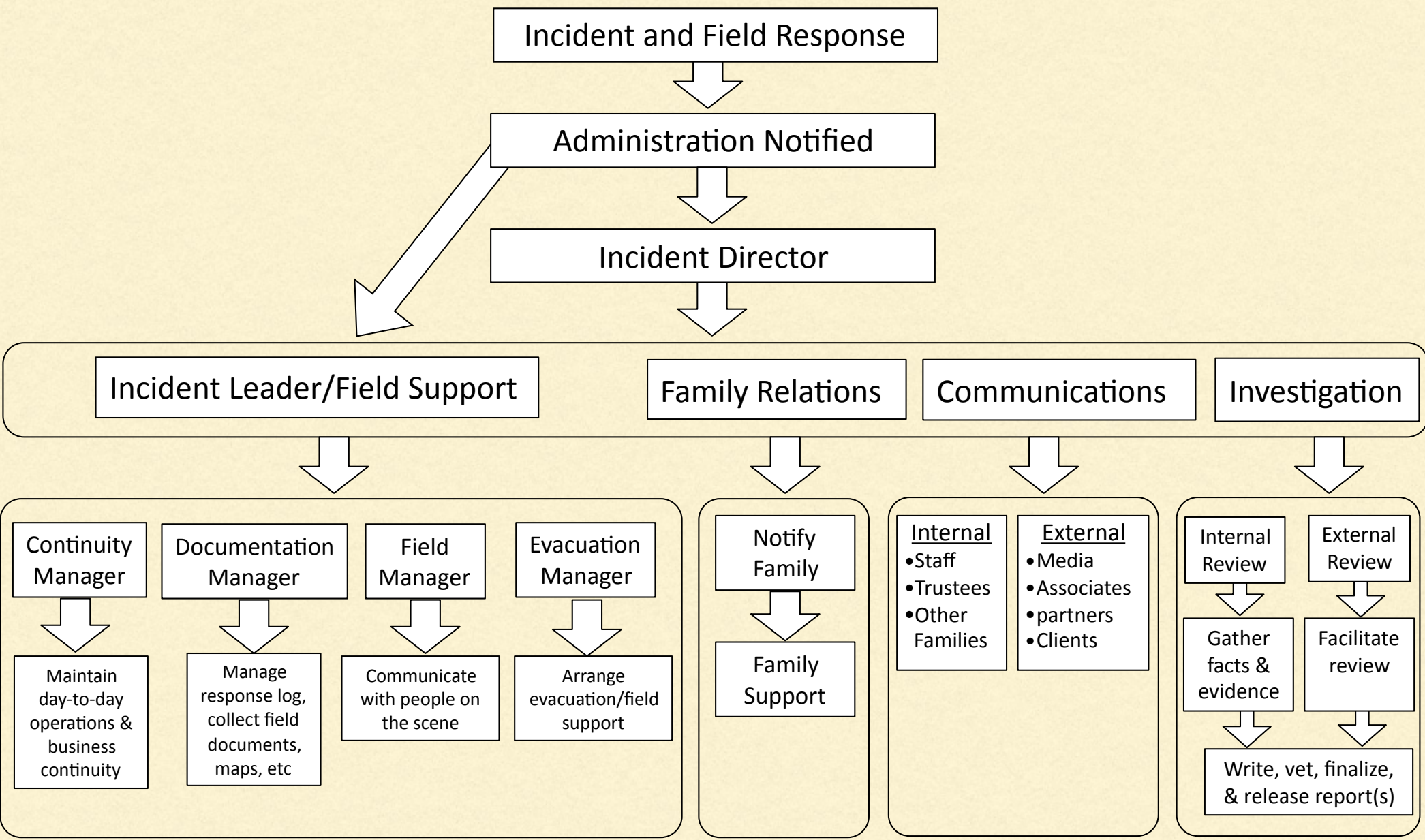
INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

What we did Review

External review

- Yes or no?
- Who arranges?
- Plan soon after incident
- Who is best suited to do the review?
- Specific charge to reviewers
- Release of review

NOLS Crisis Management Schematic



<http://www.nols.edu/wrmc/resources.shtml>



SUMMARY

“Learn to be calm in the face of chaos.” Reinhold Messner

1. Have a thorough plan with clear and immediate action steps and long-term management
2. Five components of effective crisis management
 1. Leadership–Field Support–Family Relations–Communication–Investigation
3. Know your resources
4. Be ready for the long haul

ACTION ITEMS

“Keep a cool head and a warm heart” United Educators

1. Use the NOLS schematic as a guide to develop a crisis plan
2. Identify key players in your organization who will be involved with crisis management and assign roles and responsibilities
3. Practice your crisis plan. Run a drill to identify strengths and areas that need improvement

ACTION ITEMS

“A crisis is a brutal audit of prepared plans” Weick and Sutcliffe

Thanks

Drew Leemon
drew_leemon@nols.edu

A PDF of this presentation can be found at
www.nols.edu/wrmc