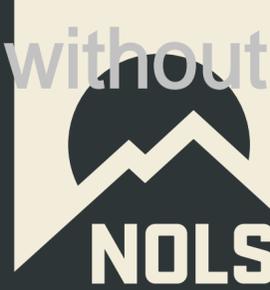


CRISIS MANAGEMENT A PRE-PLAN IN ACTION





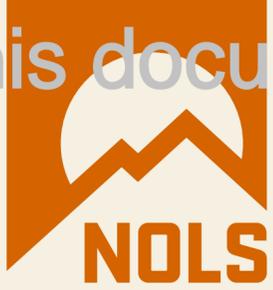
Drew Leemon
Risk Management Director

drew_leemon@nols.edu

Katie Baum Mettenbrink
Risk Services Manager

kbm@nols.edu

www.nols.edu



METHOD

**OVERVIEW OF NOLS CRISIS RESPONSE AND
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

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: Multiple injury incident, Alaska, bear attack

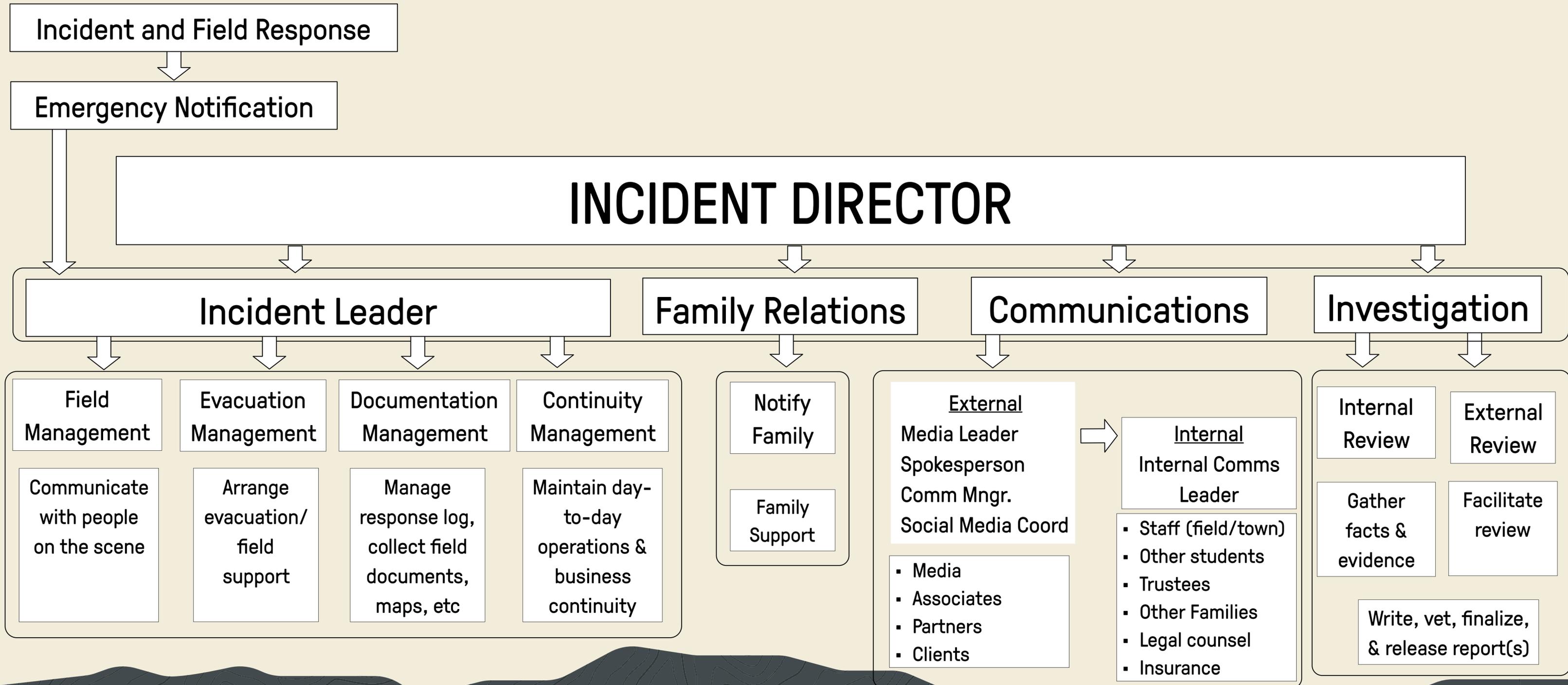
2011: Fatality, India, backpacking

2018: Cardiac arrest, Wyoming, WEMT

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

1. Provides guidance for your response and management
 - Many things happen at once
2. Prioritize tasks and actions, and deploy resources
3. Pre-determine certain actions and decisions

NOLS CRISIS MANAGEMENT SCHEMATIC

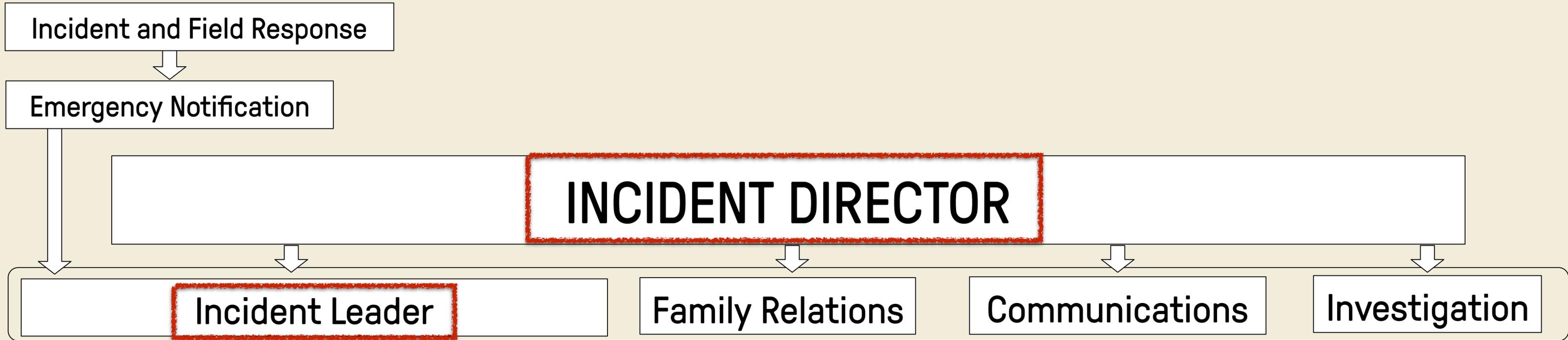


AN INCIDENT OCCURS

DAY ONE

- 6:30 PM, Friday, July 28
- The on-call emergency contact person receives an emergency satellite phone call from an instructor stating there has been a fatality on ABW 7/2 and she provides latitude and longitude coordinates.
- The connection is poor and suddenly cut off.
- **What do you do in the next 30 minutes?**

NOLS CRISIS MANAGEMENT SCHEMATIC



LEADERSHIP

INCIDENT DIRECTOR & LEADER

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

NOLS CRISIS MANAGEMENT SCHEMATIC



AN INCIDENT OCCURS

All we know is:

- Which group it is
- Their location
12 miles in wilderness in a river valley
- Immediate questions include:
 - Is the situation stable?
 - Who is the deceased?
 - What happened?
 - What support is needed?
- **What are your next steps to help the people in the field?**

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did: Evening

- Established satellite phone contact
- We learn:
 - ▶ Her name
 - ▶ She died that morning while crossing a river
 - ▶ 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 for a road head 12 miles away
 - ▶ Want to end the course early

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did: Evening

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

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did: Evening

- Helicopter retrieved body that evening
- Sheriff's deputy to investigate scene in morning
- Prepared two staff to fly in and hike out with group

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did: Day One

- Deputy sheriff and staff flew to the course
- Deputy returned and briefed crisis team on situation
- Runner party arrived at road head in evening
 - ▶ Vehicle and driver waiting
- We continued to support other courses (about 25 at that location)

FIELD OPERATIONS

What we did: Day Two

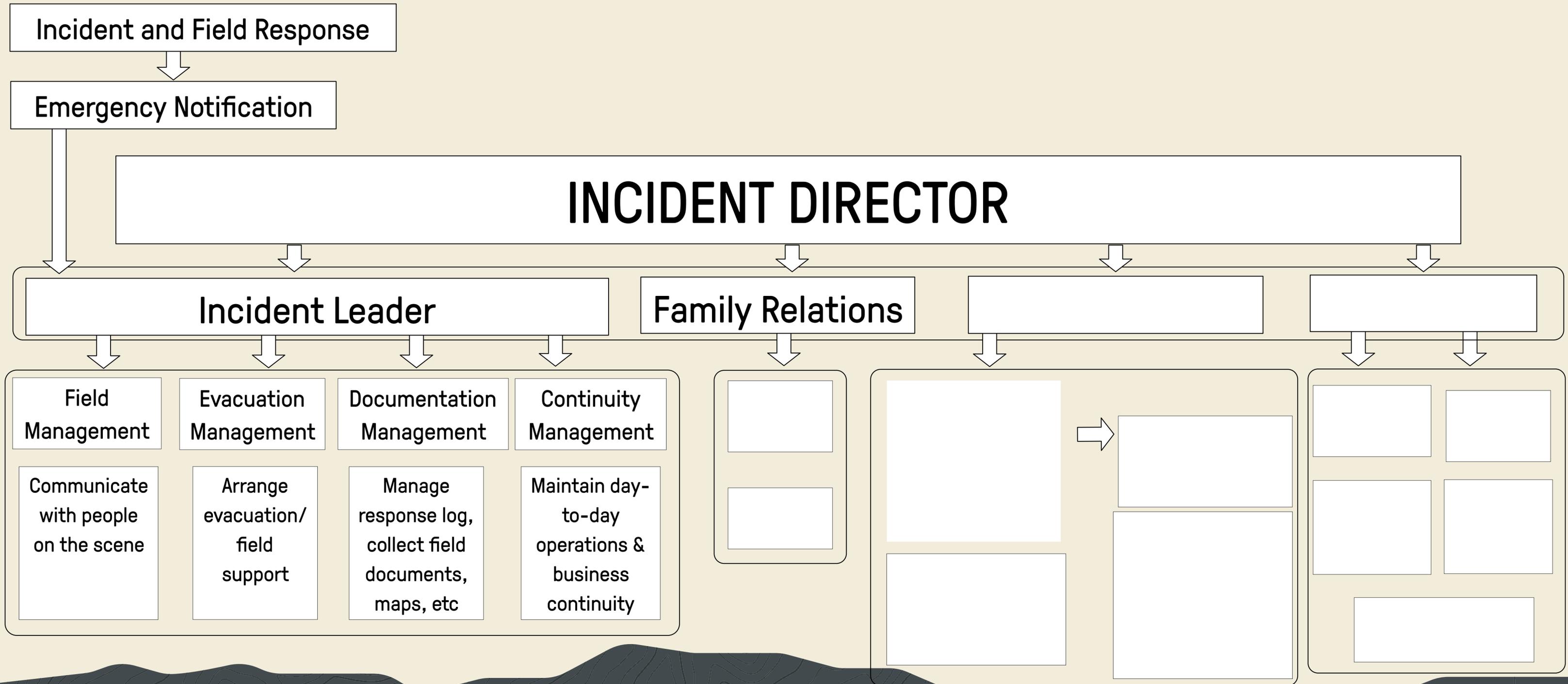
- Course came to trailhead in late afternoon
- Vehicles waiting to pick them up
- Return to campus
- Shower and fed
- Allowed to call home

FIELD OPERATIONS

Psychological Support

- Psychological stress discussion next morning
- Counseling made available for students and staff
- Normal end-of-course tasks
- Group activities for students
- Instructors stayed involved with students

NOLS CRISIS MANAGEMENT SCHEMATIC



AN INCIDENT OCCURS

All we know is:

- 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:

- President (or designee) 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:

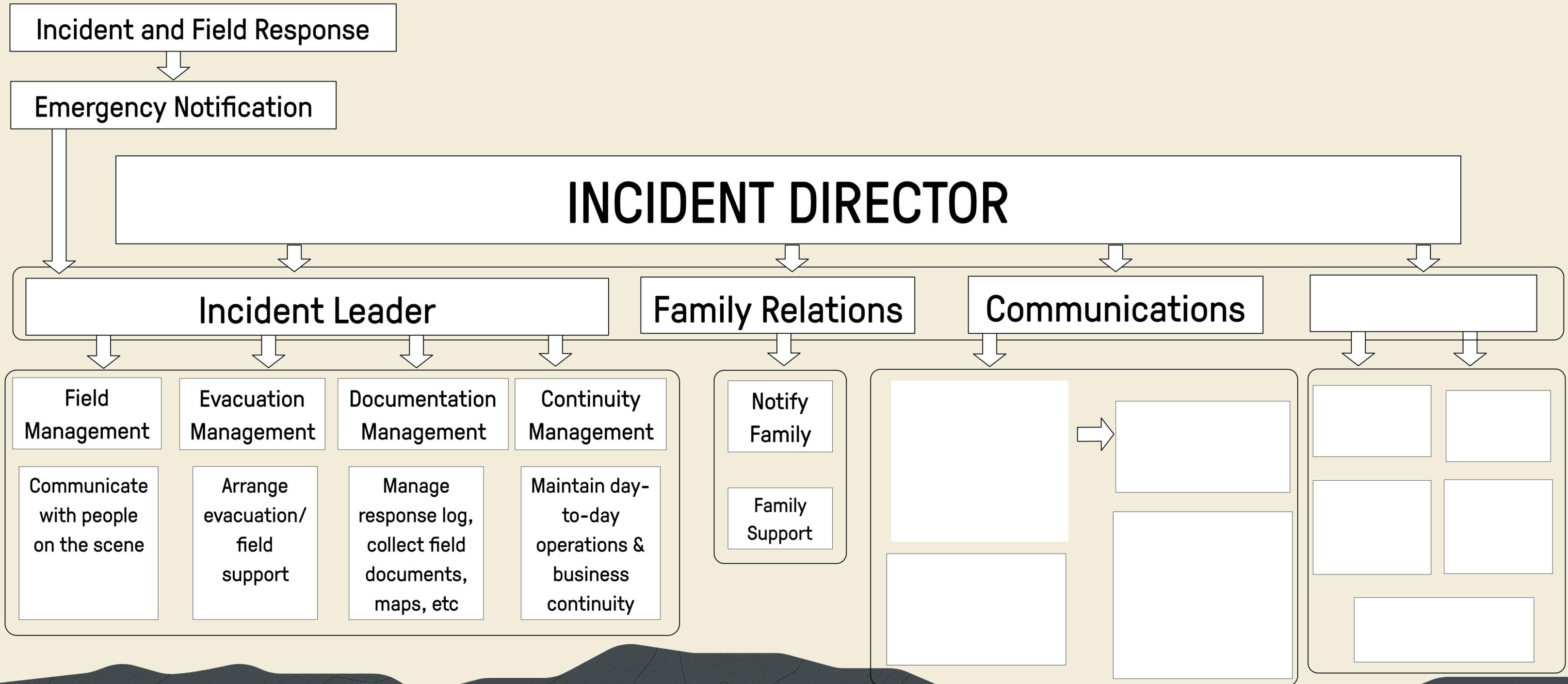
- Designated family liaison (consider divorced parents)
- Issues of family members at location
- Family interaction with students and staff
- Family members visit incident site
- Grief counselors, clergy, or therapists

FAMILY RELATIONS

What we did:

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

NOLS CRISIS MANAGEMENT SCHEMATIC



AN INCIDENT OCCURS

- Word spreads fast
- Who needs to be informed?
- We only have basic information of what happened
- **How is communication managed?**
- **Who are your audiences?**
- **What do you need to watch out for?**

COMMUNICATION

What we did:

- Establish leadership
 - Media Leader
 - Social Media Coordinator
 - Spokesperson
 - Communications Manager

COMMUNICATION

What we did:

- Audiences

External

- Media
- Associates
- Partners
- Clients

Internal

- Staff (field/town)
- Trustees
- Other students
- Other families
- Legal counsel
- Insurance

COMMUNICATION

What we did:

- Media/public messages drive all messaging
- Stand-By / Buy Time Statement
- Press Release
- Use of website

COMMUNICATION

What we did:

- Factual
 - What, when, and where
 - Maybe who (next of kin, minors)
 - Never why
 - No medical information
- Don't deny incident occurred

COMMUNICATION

What we did:

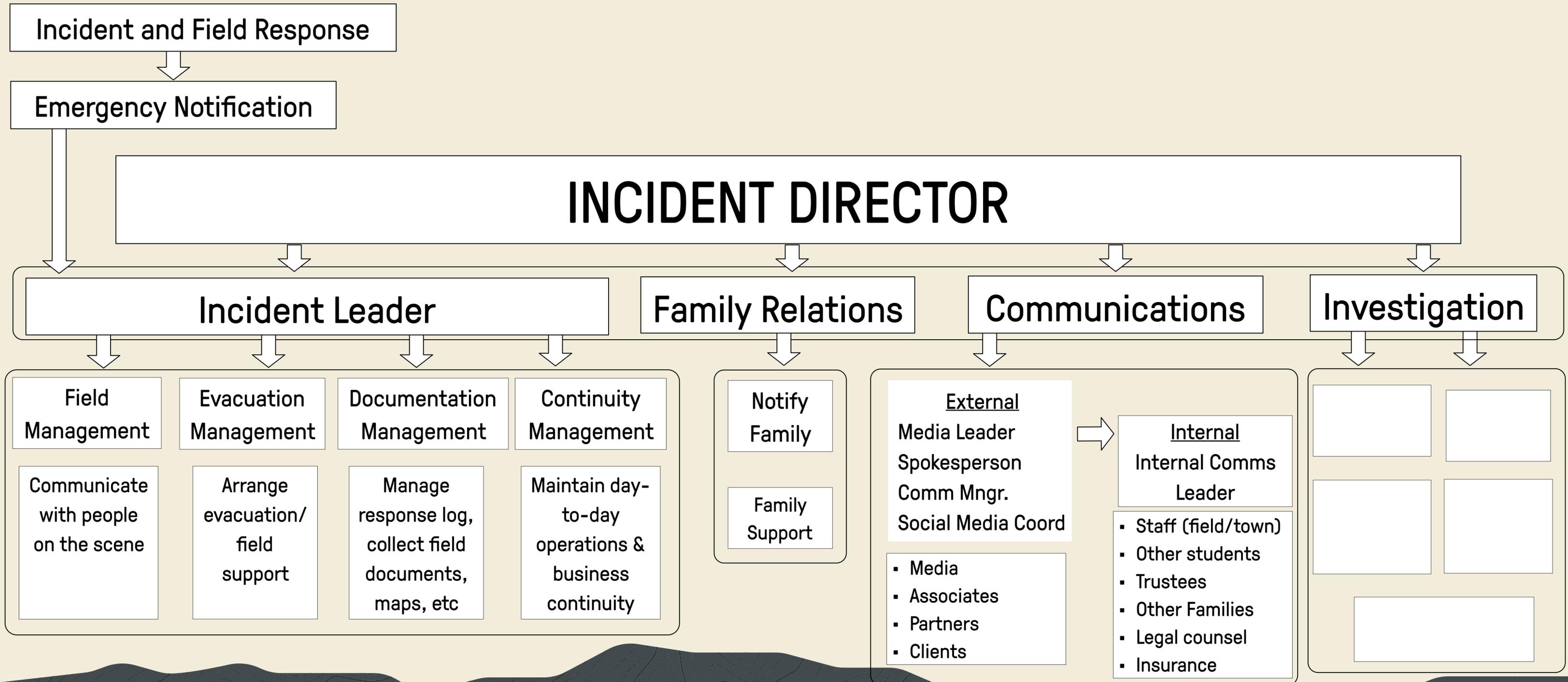
- Be cooperative
- Want a short-lived story
- Manage interviews: in person or on site
- Watch for errors
- Turn off comment feature
- Keep records of print and interviews

COMMUNICATION

What we did: Internal audiences

- Informed all staff
 - ▶ Held all staff meeting at HQ
 - ▶ Inform other NOLS locations and staff in field (memo, email, website)
 - ▶ Watch for staff judging the incident
- Limit use of email
- Called each family of other course members
- Direct people to the website

NOLS CRISIS MANAGEMENT SCHEMATIC



AN INCIDENT OCCURS

- 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?**
- **How would you 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

What we did—administrative

- Google Doc
- Student factual interviews
- Staff factual interviews

INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

What we did—documentation sources

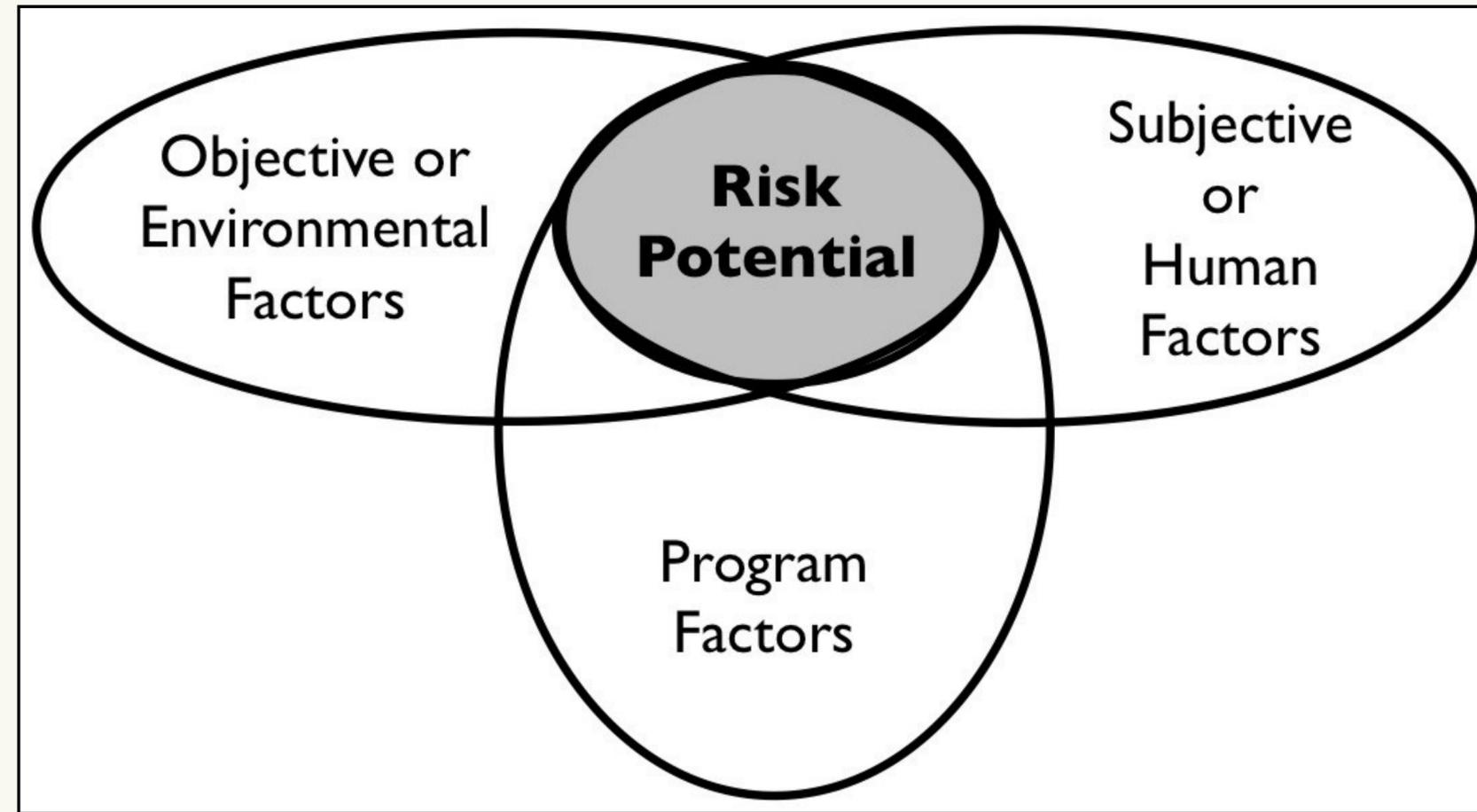
- Witness statements (written)
- Instructor statements (written)
- Interview notes
- Maps and location coordinates
- Photos and diagrams
- Weather & Environmental records
- Incident response logs (Gdoc & others)
- Course paperwork
- Daily travel plan
- Outfitting records (gear/rations)
- Briefing information
- Evaluations (student, instructor, program)
- Contact logs w/family
- Reports from other agencies (SAR, law enforcement, land agency, FOIA requests, etc.)

INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

What we did—incident review

Internal review

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



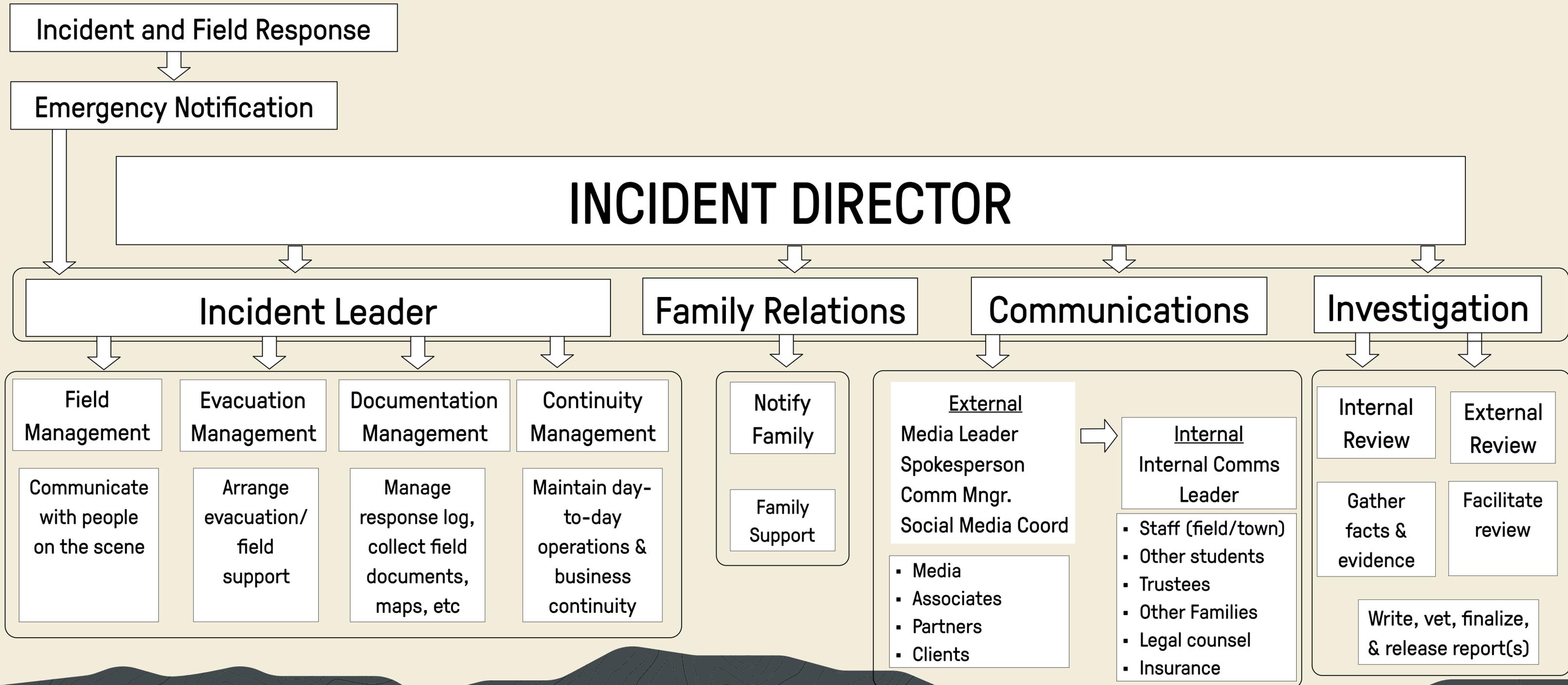
INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION

What we did—incident review

External review

- Yes or no?
- Who arranges
- Plan soon after incident
- Specific charge to reviewers
- Release of review

NOLS CRISIS MANAGEMENT SCHEMATIC



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 gaps.

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

Thanks

Drew Leemon
drew_leemon@nols.edu

Katie Baum Mettenbrink
kbm@nols.edu

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