Getting Started with InciNotes ICS 214™

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PLEASE BE SURE TO READ THE END-USER LICENSE AGREEMENT (EULA) BEFORE USING INCINOTES.

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Table of Contents

OVERVIEW .................................................. 3
STARTING INCINOTES ICS 214 .................................. 4
ICS 214 SETTINGS SCREEN .................................. 4
CREATING AN INCIDENT ....................................... 5
INCIDENT SCREEN ........................................... 6
OPERATIONAL PERIODS ....................................... 7
EVENTS .......................................................... 8
TEAM ............................................................ 9
REPORTS ......................................................... 10
LOCKING AN INCIDENT ....................................... 11
Overview

About InciNotes

InciNotes is the first Incident Management application for mobile devices, developed for efficient and authoritative documentation of Type 5 to 2 Incidents. InciNotes is a digital replacement for the ICS 201 and 214 documents, and provides additional capabilities inherit in a digital platform.

The concept for InciNotes was conceived by Will Spyrison, a retired Division Chief from the Los Angeles River Ranger District, Angeles National Forest with 16 years of experience as a Type 3 Incident Commander and 13 years as Operations Section Chief Type 2. All of his experience was put to the test when one of the largest fires seen by the US Forest Service in California, the “Station Fire”, consumed 160,571 acres and threatened lives and property in the Angeles National Forest in August of 2009. Will used a handcrafted version of the ICS 201 document to capture an unprecedented level of detail during the Initial Attack of the Incident, proving his Leader’s Intent as a Type 3 IC, and allowing a step-by-step analysis of additional problems or areas of improvement. The document survived a thorough National Fire Review, Government Accountability Investigation, and a Congressional hearing, where the standard-issue 201 would have fallen well short. Having survived the reviews and investigations, and receiving praise for the completeness of his 201, Will began searching for ways to bring Incident Management documentation into the digital age.

ICS 214

Building on the lessons learned while building the full InciNotes application, the InciNotes ICS 214 app brings many of those same advantages to every Group Leader or Division Supervisor. Designed from the ground-up for iPhone and iPad, it provides an easy and compact way to provide thorough and complete documentation about incident events, locations, team members, and more, the ICS 214 app is an indispensable part of any operator’s toolkit.
Starting InciNotes ICS 214

After you have purchased InciNotes ICS 214 from the iOS AppStore, look for the InciNotes icon on or near the last home screen of your device. Simply tap the icon to launch InciNotes ICS 214.

When ICS 214 is ready to go, the app’s main screen is presented and is where you can view existing incidents, create new incidents, and edit your settings.

In the bottom-left corner of the screen is the “User” button, which takes you to the User Information and Settings screen. See the next section (“ICS 214 Settings Screen”) for more information.

In the bottom-right corner of the screen is the “New Incident” button. Tapping this button shows a new screen, the “New Incident” screen, where you can start logging information about a new incident you’ve been assigned to. See the “Creating an Incident” section for more information.

ICS 214 Settings Screen

The User Info screen (also called the “Settings Screen”) is where information about yourself can be entered, and automatically entered into every Incident.

At the moment, the only two options are to enter your Name and normal Unit Name. Stay tuned for more!
Creating an Incident

When deployed to a new incident for the first time, the “New Incident” button will assist you in establishing the basic operating parameters. Press the "Create Incident" button in the lower-right corner of the main screen to start, which will bring up the “New Incident” screen (below).

The Incident always needs to have an identifying name, and it should be unique enough to allow you to quickly identify it. All other fields are optional, but recommended.

The next box, titled “Your Unit Name”, is where the name of your group, division, or assignment. If a Default Unit name value has been entered in the “User Info” screen, it will automatically be entered. See the “ICS 214 Settings Screen” section for more information.

When the “Time Started” button is pressed, a date and time picking control will appear from the bottom of the screen, allowing you to select an appropriate start time. Tap anywhere outside the picking control to enter the selected date and close the control.

Note that you do not have to enter the actual start of the incident, but could be the start of the currently active or upcoming Operational Period. InciNotes ICS 214 will assume the op. period will be 24 hours after the time entered, but this can easily be overridden with the actual start and end times. See the “Operation Periods” section for more information.

To enter your direct Supervisor's information and ICS position, press either the “Supervisor” or “Supervisor Role” button, and select an appropriate option from the lists that appear. Press the “+” button in the upper-right corner to add an additional ICS position or contact, as appropriate. See the “Team” section for more information.

When you have entered all the necessary information, press the “Done” button to finish creating the new Incident, and show the corresponding “Incident Screen”.
Incident Screen

The Incident Screen is the “home base” for all the information about an Incident. The navigation bar along the top of the screen lists the Incident name, and has a “Done” and “+” button. Below that, some basic data about the Incident is shown on a darker gray panel: the time the Incident was started, your unit name, and progress in the current Operational Period. To the far right is the button, where the Operational Period and Supervisor information can be changed.

Below the basic info panel is a table, listing different types of data depending on the selection of the tab bar at the very bottom.

**Events**
Lists all events that have occurred in the Incident, from most recent to oldest. Pressing the “+” button allows you to log a new Event to the list. See the “Events” section for more information.

**Team**
Lists all team members and the current supervisor, in the order added. Pressing the “+” button allows you to create a new ICS position record, with a position title and currently assigned person. See the “Team” section for more information.

**Reports**
Lists all ICS 214 PDF reports that have been created. Pressing the “+” button allows you to create a new report, or tapping an item in the list allows you view an existing report. See the “Reports” section for more information.
Operational Periods

When you create a new Incident in the InciNotes ICS 214 app, it automatically creates a default operational period that lasts from 24 hours from the Incident “Start Time” (from the “New Incident” screen), the maximum length of an Initial Attack period; the operational period is also listed as the “Initial Attack”.

This can easily be overridden after the Incident has been created, however. By pressing the button on the Incident Screen, the “Operational Period” screen (right) will slide in and the Start and End Time can be manually adjusted.

If the current date and time is between the listed Start Time and End Time, the Op. Period is considered current, and the edit buttons will be disabled by default (as shown at the right). In order to override the current values, first press the “Edit” button in the upper-right corner of the screen.

If, however, the current date and time fall outside this range, the Operational Period is considered invalid, and needs updating (below right). The screen will show a warning, the edit buttons will be enabled by default, and new values are automatically suggested and entered into the Start and End Time fields.

**NOTE:** The Operational Period times the InciNotes ICS 214 app will suggest is based on a standard 12-hour window, starting at either 0600 or 1800 local.

The last feature of the “Operational Period” screen is the “Incident Finished” button along the button. See the “Locking an Incident” section for more information.
Events

Incident Events are used to track information about the progress, status, and other significant information about an Incident. When the “Events” tab is selected on the Incident Screen, the table lists all the events that have occurred in the incident. The event type is shown on the top light, along with the event date and time. The first line of the event’s description is shown below.

Either pressing the “+” button an existing event brings up the “New Event” window (right). The Event Description is a simple text field, allowing any desired information to be captured.

The Event Type can be chosen from a small pre-configured list; however, the real power is being able to add your own custom Event Types as needed. By tapping the “Type” button, a picker control and text box will appear from the bottom of the screen, allowing you to choose from an existing Event Type, or add a new Type. If you enter a custom Event Type string in the text box, the text will appear in the Event Type picker for easy access.

In addition to a date and time, type, and description, you can also attach an image or a geographic coordinate (latitude / longitude). Press either the 📷 button on the left, or the 🗺 button on the right to attach a coordinate or an image, respectively.

**NOTE:** InciNotes ICS 214 app requires access to the Photos and/or Camera to attach images, and Location access (“While Using”) to attach coordinates. If either of these features isn’t working, please open the Settings app, scroll to the “ICS-214” item, and give access to all the appropriate items.

After attaching an image to the Event, the 📷 button will be replaced by a small preview of the selected image.

After attaching a geographic coordinate to the Event, the 🗺 button will be replaced by a “Map” button; pressing it shows the attached location on a map, if cell service or a WiFi connection is available.
Team

The Team section allows you to keep track of all the members of your group or division, your supervisor along with their contact information, or any other position within the ICS Structure that is needed.

Pressing the “Team” tab at the bottom of the Incident Screen lists the Supervisor (if present) at the top of the list, and any other positions in the order they were created. Pressing the “+” button in the upper-right shows the “Role” screen (right), allowing you to add a new ICS position. Tapping an existing position allows you to re-assign the position to a new person.

NOTE: The Supervisor position must be edited from the “Operational Period” screen. See the “Operational Periods” section for more information.

The “Role” screen (right) allows you to pick the ICS Position (or “role”), and the person filling it. The bottom of the screen lists the assignment history for the position, from most recent assignment to least.

Pressing the “Role” button shows the “Select Role” screen, while pressing the “Person” button shows the “Add Person” screen. Both function very similarly, with a list of existing items, and a “+” button in the upper-right corner to add a new item.

To add a new ICS position, press the “+” button on the “Select Role” screen, and enter the position title at the prompt.

To add a new contact to the InciNotes ICS 214 App database, press the “+” button from the “Add Person” screen, and enter as much information as required on the “New Person” screen.

The “Add Person” screen also allows you to edit an existing contact information stored in the ICS 214 app’s database, by pressing the button next to the appropriate items in the list.
Getting Started with InciNotes

Reports

After all the data is collected into InciNotes ICS 214, it can be turned into a PDF Document that can be distributed to anyone via e-mail, message, or saved for long-term storage.

To create a Report, select the “Reports” tab on the Incident Screen and press the “+” button in the upper-right corner. The Create Report screen (right) is shown, allowing you to select the Operational Period to create a report for, and whether or not to include event images on additional pages.

After pressing the “Create Report” button, the Create Report screen is hidden while the app creates a snapshot of the incident data as a ICS 214 form PDF. When the process if finished, the PDF is automatically shown, and added to the list of Reports on the Incident Screen.

When viewing a PDF report, navigate through it a page at a time by swiping left or right. Or, to jump between larger sections of the document, tap the preview bar along the bottom of the screen.

Once created, reports can be distributed as other PDFs in iOS: press the button in the upper-right corner to show the iOS Share Sheet, and select from the available options, such as Messages, Mail, Print, AirDrop, and more.
Locking an Incident

Locking provides a mechanism for marking the end of the Incident, and solidifies InciNotes’ data as an unalterable account of the Incident as it unfolded. After an Incident is locked, none of the data contained inside InciNotes ICS 214 for the Incident cannot be modified.

To Lock an incident and mark it as finished, press the “Incident Finished” button at the bottom of the Operational Period screen, and confirm you really wish to Lock the incident at the prompt (right).

When an Incident is locked, a report is created for the final op. period, the progress bar on the Incident screen is changed to green (below left), and a small lock is listed next to the Incident on the ICS 214 app’s main screen (below right).