NIMS and the National Preparedness System

As part of the National Preparedness System, NIMS and the National Planning Frameworks enable scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures that deliver the necessary capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate an incident.

Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8) directs the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate with other Federal departments and agencies as well as State, Tribal, and local governments to facilitate an integrated, all-of-Nation, capabilities-based approach to preparedness. This is to be accomplished by developing a National Preparedness Goal which defines core capabilities and specific, quantifiable performance objectives necessary to prepare for incidents posing the greatest risk to national security. PPD-8 further requires the creation of a National Preparedness System describing the cycle of planning, organizing, equipping, training, and exercising necessary to achieve the Goal. The System includes a series of integrated National Planning Frameworks covering the five key mission areas for emergency management (prevention, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation) coordinated within a unified system with common terminology and approach. The integrated management and operational structure inherent to NIMS is a foundational element of the planning frameworks.

The Goal establishes readiness priorities, targets, and metrics, enabling the Nation to easily recognize capabilities that need improvement and sustain capabilities to manage major events using the protocols established in NIMS. Together, the Goal, NIMS, and the System define what needs to be done to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate an incident; how it needs to be done; and how well it needs to be done.

NIMS Compliance Assistance Support Tool

The National Integration Center maintains the NIMS Compliance Assistance Support Tool (NIMSCAST) as the premier self-assessment instrument for Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments to evaluate and report their department, agency, and jurisdiction’s implementation of NIMS.

Since Federal fiscal year 2005, Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) requires Federal departments and agencies to make adoption of NIMS by State and local organizations a condition for Federal preparedness assistance through grants, contracts, or other activities. The National Integration Center identifies Implementation Objectives, as contained in the NIMSCAST, to help Federal, State, and local governments to determine if they have met the HSPD-5 adoption requirement.

For more information on the NIMSCAST, visit: http://www.fema.gov/nimcast/index.jsp

NIMS Resource Center

For additional information relating to NIMS and NIMS implementation, go to FEMA’s NIMS Resource Center, visit: www.fema.gov/nims

What is NIMS?

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is a set of concepts and principles that describe a standardized methodology for the management of disasters and emergencies regardless of their cause, size, location, or complexity. NIMS is the national blueprint for effective and efficient incident management. It provides a consistent nationwide approach and vocabulary for all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate incidents.

State, Tribal, and local governments play an important role in implementing NIMS. They are responsible for ensuring that the systems and processes necessary to communicate and support NIMS concepts and principles (at all jurisdictional levels) are in place. Tribal and local governments may not have the resources available to support NIMS implementation on their own. State governments provide some of that support by encouraging cooperation across localities and response agencies as well as the pooling of resources to implement NIMS.

A basic premise of NIMS is that all incidents begin and end locally. The Federal Government supports State, Tribal, and local government authorities when their resources are overwhelmed, or are anticipated to become overwhelmed. In such situations, the Federal Government coordinates assistance from the appropriate departments or agencies to affected authorities. Federal support is most efficient when all participating organizations—regardless of level of government or functional discipline—practice NIMS.

The benefits of NIMS include:

- A standardized approach to incident management that is scalable and flexible.
- Enhanced cooperation and interoperability among responders.
- Comprehensive all-hazards preparedness.
- Efficient resource coordination among jurisdictions and/or organizations.
- Integration of best practices and lessons learned for continuous improvement.

NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Working together to prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters of all kinds...

NIMS Implementation for State, Tribal, and Local Governments

September 2011

Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
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(202) 646-2500
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NIMS IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES

Since 2004, the National Integration Center has identified key objectives to assist with State, Tribal, and local implementation of NIMS. These activities are primarily categorized by the following NIMS components: Preparedness; Communications and Information Management; Resource Management; and Command and Management. State, Tribal, and local governments should ensure all NIMS objectives (below) have been initiated and/or are in progress toward completion.

ADOPTION

Adopt NIMS for all departments and agencies. Promote and encourage NIMS adoption by associations, utilities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector emergency management and incident response organizations.

Establish and maintain a planning process to communicate, monitor, and implement all NIMS implementation objectives across the State, Tribal, and local governments, to include departments and agencies. This process must provide a means for measuring progress and facilitate reporting.

Designate and maintain a single point of contact within government to serve as the Principal Coordinator for NIMS implementation jurisdiction-wide (to include a Principal Coordinator for NIMS implementation within each department and/or agency).

Ensure that Federal preparedness awards from Federal departments and agencies support all NIMS implementation activities.

Audit agencies and review organizations should routinely include NIMS implementation in all audits associated with Federal preparedness awards.

PREPAREDNESS

Revise and update emergency operations plans, standard operating procedures, and standard operating guidelines to incorporate NIMS and National Response Framework (NRF) components, principles, and policies, to include planning, training, response, exercises, equipment, evaluation, and corrective actions.

Promote and/or develop intrastate and interagency mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements (to include agreements with the private sector and NGOs).

Use existing resources such as programs, personnel, and training facilities to coordinate and deliver NIMS training.

Implement training program to ensure appropriate personnel have taken the following NIMS training (as identified in National Integration Center training guidance): ICS-100, ICS-200, ICS-300, ICS-400, IS-700, IS-701, IS-702, IS-703, IS-704, and IS-800.

Incorporate NIMS concepts and principles into all appropriate training and exercises.

Plan for and/or participate in an all-hazards exercise program (e.g., the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program) that involves emergency management/response personnel from multiple disciplines and/or multiple jurisdictions.

Incorporate corrective actions into preparedness and response plans and procedures.

COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Apply common and consistent terminology as used in NIMS, including the establishment of plain language (clear text) communications standards.

Utilize systems, tools, and processes to present consistent and accurate information (e.g., a common operating picture) during an incident/planned event.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Inventory State, Tribal, and local response assets.

Identify those inventory assets that match NIMS Resource Typing Definitions, as defined by the National Integration Center.

Ensure that equipment, communications, and data systems acquired through State and local acquisition programs are interoperable.

Utilize resource asset inventory for intrastate/interstate mutual aid requests (such as Emergency Management Assistance Compact), training, exercises, and incidents/planned events.

Initiate development of a State/Tribal-wide system (integrating local jurisdictions) to credential emergency management/response personnel to ensure proper authorization and access to an incident including those involving mutual aid agreements and/or assistance agreements.

COMMAND & MANAGEMENT

Manage incidents and planned events in accordance with Incident Command System organizational structures and procedures, to include consistent application of incident action and common communications planning, use of area command and overseeing multiple incidents handled by separate ICS organizations or incident management teams, and use of Unified Command involving multiple jurisdictions and/or agencies.

Coordinate and support emergency management and incident response objectives through the development and use of integrated Multiagency Coordination Systems (MACS) (i.e., develop and maintain connectivity capability between local Incident Command Posts, local 911 centers, Federal, State, Tribal, and local Emergency Operations Centers, as well as other NRF organizational elements).

Institutionalize, within the framework of ICS, Public Information (e.g., a Joint Information System and a Joint Information Center) during an incident/planned event.

Ensure that Public Information procedures and processes can gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate information during an incident/planned event.