

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)
INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSE
NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS),
AN INTRODUCTION (IS-700.A)
STUDY GUIDE**

This Study Guide has been created to provide an overview of the course content presented in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Independent Study Course titled **“IS-700A National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction”**. This guide has been created from material provided in the IS-700A “Course Summary”. This study guide is not intended to replace the content presented in the IS-700A course. The IS-700A course must be completed online and successful completion of the final exam for official course credit.

The FEMA IS-700A interactive web-based course can be accessed online at:
<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-700.a>

Lesson 1: National Incident Management System (NIMS) Overview

The National Incident Management System, or NIMS, provides the foundation needed to ensure that we can work together when our communities and the Nation need us the most. NIMS also:

- Integrates best practices into a comprehensive, standardized framework.
- Is applicable and flexible enough to be applicable across the full spectrum of potential incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity.
- Is based on best practices collected from all levels of responders

Using NIMS allows us to work together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents.

The benefit of NIMS is that it provides a consistent nationwide template or organizational structure to enable and improve integration among jurisdictions and disciplines at Federal, State, tribal, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity in order to reduce the loss of life and property and harm to the environment.

What NIMS is Not:

NIMS is not an operational incident management or resource allocation plan.

HSPD-5, Management of Domestic Incidents

Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5, "Management of Domestic Incidents," directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to:

- Develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- Develop the National Response Framework (NRF).

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The NIMS Mandate

HSPD-5 requires all Federal departments and agencies to:

- Adopt NIMS and use it in their individual incident management programs and activities.
- Make adoption of NIMS by State, tribal, and local organizations a condition for Federal preparedness assistance (through grants, contracts, and other activities).

Collaborative Incident Management

NIMS represents a core set of doctrines, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes that enables effective, efficient, and collaborative incident management.

NIMS Builds on Best Practices

Building on the foundation provided by existing emergency management and incident response systems used by jurisdictions, organizations, and functional disciplines at all levels, NIMS integrates best practices into a comprehensive framework.

These best practices lay the groundwork for the components of NIMS and provide the mechanisms for the further development and refinement of supporting national standards, guidelines, protocols, systems, and technologies.

NIMS fosters the development of specialized technologies that facilitate emergency management and incident response activities and allows for the adoption of new approaches that will enable continuous refinement of the system over time.

NIMS Components

NIMS is much more than just using the Incident Command System or an organization chart. NIMS is a consistent, nationwide, systematic approach that includes the following components:

- Preparedness
- Communications and Information Management
- Resource Management
- Command and Management
- Ongoing Management and Maintenance

The components of NIMS were not designed to stand alone, but to work together.

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Preparedness

Preparedness involves an integrated combination of assessment; planning; procedures and protocols; training and exercises; personnel qualifications, licensure, and certification; equipment certification; and evaluation and revision.

Communications and Information Management

NIMS describes the requirements necessary for a standardized framework for communications and emphasizes the need for a common operating picture. This component is based on the concepts of interoperability, reliability, scalability, and portability, as well as the resiliency and redundancy of communications and information systems.

Resource Management

The flow of resources (such as personnel, equipment, or supplies) must be fluid and adaptable to the requirements of the incident. NIMS defines standardized mechanisms and establishes the resource management process to identify requirements, order and acquire, mobilize, track and report, recover and demobilize, reimburse, and inventory resources.

Command and Management

The Command and Management component of NIMS is designed to enable effective and efficient incident management and coordination by providing a flexible, standardized incident management structure. The structure is based on three key organizational constructs: the Incident Command System, Multiagency Coordination Systems, and Public Information.

Ongoing Management and Maintenance

Within the auspices of Ongoing Management and Maintenance, there are two components: the National Integration Center (NIC) and Supporting Technologies.

Flexibility

The components of NIMS are adaptable and scalable to any situation, from routine, local incidents, to incidents requiring the activation of interstate mutual aid, to those requiring a coordinated Federal response. NIMS applies to all types of incidents.

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Standardization

NIMS provides a set of standardized organizational structures that improve integration and connectivity among jurisdictions and disciplines, starting with a common foundation of preparedness and planning.

Personnel and organizations that have adopted the common NIMS framework are able to work together, thereby fostering cohesion among the various organizations involved in all aspects of an incident.

Lesson 2: NIMS

What Is NIMS Preparedness?

The concepts and principles that form the basis for preparedness are the integration of the concepts and principles of all the components of NIMS.

NIMS provide the mechanisms and tools to help enhance preparedness. Within NIMS, preparedness focuses on:

- Planning
- Procedures and protocols,
- Training and exercises,
- Personnel qualification and certification, and
- Equipment certification.

NIMS and Other Preparedness Efforts

Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5 established a single, comprehensive approach to incident management. The following additional Presidential Directives are linked to national preparedness:

- **HSPD-8: National Preparedness** directed DHS to lead a national initiative to develop a National Preparedness System—a common, unified approach to “strengthen the preparedness of the United States to prevent and respond to threatened or actual domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies.”
- **Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8)** describes the Nation's approach to preparedness—one that involves the whole community, including individuals, businesses, community- and faith-based organizations, schools, tribes, and all levels of government (Federal, State, local, tribal and territorial). Click on this link to view PPD-8.

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NIMS and the National Response Framework

The National Response Framework (NRF):

- Is a guide to how the Nation conducts all-hazards response.
- Is focused on improving the Federal Agencies response to all hazardous incidents and events
- Builds upon the NIMS coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation, linking all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

A basic premise of both NIMS and the NRF is that incidents typically are managed at the local level first. Following NIMS doctrine, the NRF is designed to ensure that local jurisdictions retain command, control, and authority over response activities for their jurisdictional areas.

Elected and Appointed Officials

Elected and appointed officials should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for successful emergency management and incident response. Elected and appointed officials do not necessarily assume the role of Incident Commander.

To better serve their constituents, elected and appointed officials should do the following:

- Help to establish relationships (including mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements) with other jurisdictions and, as appropriate, with NGOs and the private sector.
- Provide guidance to their jurisdictions, departments, and/or agencies, with clearly stated policies for NIMS implementation.
- Understand laws and regulations in their jurisdictions that pertain to emergency management and incident response.
- Understand, commit to, and receive training on NIMS and participate in exercises.
- Maintain an understanding of basic emergency management, continuity of operations/continuity of government plans, jurisdictional response capabilities, and initiation of disaster declarations.
- Lead and encourage preparedness efforts within the community, agencies of the jurisdiction, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector, as appropriate.
- Support and encourage participation in mitigation efforts within the jurisdiction and, as appropriate, with NGOs and the private sector.
- Maintain awareness of critical infrastructure and key resources within their jurisdictions, potential incident impacts, and restoration priorities.

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Preparedness: Continuous Cycle

Preparedness is achieved and maintained through a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action.

Preparedness: A Unified Approach

Preparedness requires a unified approach to emergency management and incident response activities. To achieve a unified approach, components of NIMS should be integrated within the emergency management and incident response structure.

Levels of Capability

For NIMS to function effectively, jurisdictions and organizations should set expectations about the capabilities and resources that will be provided before, during, and after an incident.

Coordination of Preparedness Activities

Preparedness activities should be coordinated among all appropriate agencies and organizations within the jurisdiction, as well as across jurisdictions. Preparedness activities may involve the following groups:

- **Individuals** should participate in their community's outreach programs that promote and support individual and community preparedness (e.g., public education, training sessions, demonstrations).
- **Preparedness Organizations** provide coordination for emergency management and incident response activities before an incident or scheduled event. These organizations range from groups of individuals to small committees to large standing organizations (e.g., Citizen Corps, and/or Local Emergency Planning Committees).
- **Nongovernmental Organizations** such as community-based, faith-based, or national organizations (e.g., the Salvation Army, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and the American Red Cross), play vital support roles in emergency management and incident response activities.
- **Private Sector** such as utilities, industries, corporations, and businesses play a vital support role in emergency management and incident response and should be incorporated into all aspects of NIMS.

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Continuity Capability

Continuity planning should be instituted within all organizations (including all levels of government and the private sector) and address such things as:

- Essential functions.
- Orders of succession.
- Delegations of authority.
- Continuity facilities.
- Continuity communications.
- Essential records management.
- Human resources.

Mutual Aid Agreements and Assistance Agreements

Mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements provide a mechanism to quickly obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services.

Types of Mutual Aid Agreements and Assistance Agreements

There are several types of these kinds of agreements, including but not limited to the following:

- Automatic Mutual Aid
- Local Mutual Aid
- Regional Mutual Aid
- Statewide/Intrastate Mutual Aid
- Interstate Agreements
- International Agreements
- Other Agreements

Procedural Documents

Procedural documents should detail the specific actions/ procedures to follow before, during, and after an incident to implement a plan or system. There are four standard levels of procedural documents:

1. Standard Operating Procedure or Operations Manual: a document that provides the purpose, authorities, duration, and details for the preferred method of performing a single function or a number of interrelated functions in a uniform manner.
2. Field Operations Guide: contains essential information required to perform specific assignments or functions.
3. Mobilization Guide: outlines agreements, processes, and procedures used by all participating organizations for activating, assembling, and transporting resources.

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4. Job Aid Checklist: is intended to ensure that specific steps for completing a task or assignment are accomplished.

Protocols

Protocols are sets of established guidelines for actions (which may be designated by individuals, teams, functions, or capabilities) under various specified conditions.

Training

Personnel with roles in emergency management and incident response should be appropriately trained to improve all-hazards capabilities nationwide. Training should allow practitioners to:

- Use the concepts and principles of NIMS in exercises, planned events, and actual incidents.
- Become more comfortable using NIMS, including the Incident Command System.

Exercises

Emergency management/response personnel need to participate in realistic exercises. Exercises should:

- Include multidisciplinary, multijurisdictional incidents.
- Require interactions/ participation with the private sector and nongovernmental organizations.
- Cover all aspects of preparedness plans, particularly the processes and procedures for activating local, intrastate, and/or interstate mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements.
- Contain a mechanism for incorporating corrective actions and lessons learned from incidents into the planning process.

Personnel Qualifications and Certification

A critical element of NIMS preparedness is the use of national standards that allow for common or compatible structures for the qualification, licensure, and certification of emergency management/response personnel.

Equipment Certification

Equipment certification helps ensure that the equipment acquired will perform to certain standards and also supports planning and rapid fulfillment of needs.

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Mitigation and Preparedness

- Mitigation provides a critical foundation in the effort to reduce the loss of life and property and to minimize damage to the environment from natural or manmade disasters.
- Preparedness planning and mitigation planning are complementary processes that should support one another.

Lesson 3: NIMS Communications and Information

What Is NIMS Communications and Information Management?

Effective emergency response depends on communication—the ability to maintain a common operating picture through the constant flow of information.

NIMS identify several important features of public safety communications and information systems. Communications systems need to be:

- **Interoperable**—able to communicate within and across agencies and jurisdictions.
- **Reliable**—able to function in the context of any kind of emergency.
- **Portable**—built on standardized radio technologies, protocols, and frequencies.
- **Scalable**—suitable for use on a small or large scale as the needs of the incident dictate.
- **Resilient**—able to perform despite damaged or lost infrastructure.
- **Redundant**—able to use alternate communications methods when primary systems go out.

Flexible Communications and Information Systems

NIMS Communications and Information Management component promotes the use of flexible communications and information systems.

Common Operating Picture

Achieving a common operating picture allows on-scene and off-scene personnel—such as those at the Incident Command Post, Emergency Operations Center, or within a Multiagency Coordination Group—to have the same information about the incident, including the availability and location of resources and the status of assistance requests.

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Interoperability

First and foremost, interoperability is the ability of emergency management/response personnel to interact and work well together.

To achieve interoperability, communications and information systems should be designed to be:

- **Reliable**—able to function in any type of incident, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity.
- **Portable**—built on standardized radio technologies, protocols, and frequencies that allow communications systems to be deployed to different locations and integrated seamlessly with other systems.
- **Scalable**—suitable for use on a small or large scale, allowing for an increasing number of users.

Communications systems ensure that the flow of information will not be interrupted during an incident through:

- **Resiliency**—able to withstand and continue to perform after damage or loss of infrastructure.
- **Redundancy**—providing for either duplication of identical services or the ability to communicate through diverse, alternative methods when standard capabilities suffer damage.

Standardized Communications Types

Successful communications and information management require that emergency management/response personnel and their affiliated organizations use the following types of standardized communications:

- **Strategic Communications:** High-level directions, including resource priority decisions, roles and responsibilities determinations, and overall incident response courses of action.
- **Tactical Communications:** Communications between command and support elements and, as appropriate, cooperating agencies and organizations.
- **Support Communications:** Coordination in support of strategic and tactical communications (for example, communications among hospitals concerning resource ordering, dispatching, and tracking from logistics centers; traffic and public works communications).
- **Public Address Communications:** Emergency alerts and warnings, press conferences, etc.

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Policy and Planning: Guidelines

Sound communications management policies and plans should include information about the following aspects of communications and information management:

- Information needs should be defined by the jurisdiction/organization.
- The jurisdiction's or organization's information management system should provide guidance, standards, and tools to enable the integration of information needs into a common operating picture when needed.
- Procedures and protocols for the release of warnings, incident notifications, public communications, and other critical information are disseminated through a defined combination of networks used by the Emergency Operations Center.
- Agencies at all levels should plan in advance for the effective and efficient use of information management technologies.

Equipment Standards and Training

Standards help ensure a seamless interface between communications systems, especially between the public and private sectors. Periodic training and exercises are essential so that personnel capabilities and limitations of communications plans and systems are addressed before an incident.

Incident Information

Shared information is vital to the Incident Commander, Unified Command, and decision makers within supporting agencies and organizations. A single piece of information may provide input for; Development of incident objectives and the Incident Action Plan (IAP); Identification of safety hazards; Determination of resource needs; Formulation of public information messages.

Examples of Incident Information

The following are examples of information generated by an incident that can be used for decision making purposes:

- Incident Notification, Situation, and Status Reports
- Analytical Data
- Geospatial Information

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Communications and Data Standards

Communications and data standards are established to allow diverse organizations to work together effectively. Standards may include:

- A standard set of organizational structures and responsibilities.
- Common “typing” of communications resources to reflect specific capabilities.
- Use of agreed-upon communications protocols.
- Common identifier “titles” for personnel, facilities, and operational locations used to support incident operations.

Plain Language and Common Terminology

ICS encourages the use of plain English in emergency management and incident response:

- Facilitates interoperability across agencies/organizations, jurisdictions, and disciplines.
- Ensures that information dissemination is timely, clear, acknowledged, and understood by all intended recipients.
- Is a matter of safety.

Codes should *not* be used, and all communications should be confined to essential messages. The use of acronyms should be avoided during incidents requiring the participation of multiple agencies or organizations.

Encryption or Tactical Language

When necessary, information may need to be encrypted so that security can be maintained.

Public Information

Providing effective incident information to the public is an important element of incident management.

- The **Joint Information System (JIS)** is the framework which integrates incident information and public affairs into a cohesive organization designed to provide consistent, coordinated, accurate, accessible, and timely information.
- The **Joint Information Center (JIC)** provides a structure for developing and delivering incident- related coordinated messages by developing, recommending, and executing public information plans and strategies.

Additional information on these elements is presented in the Command and Management component.

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Information Security

Procedures and protocols must be established to ensure information security. Inadequate information security can result in the release of untimely, inappropriate, and piecemeal information that can compound an already complicated situation.

Lesson 4: NIMS Resource

What Is NIMS Resource Management?

NIMS establishes a standardized approach for managing resources before, during, and after an incident. Resources include:

- Personnel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Facilities.

Mutual aid partners exchange information about resource assets and needs. Resource readiness and credentialing are maintained through periodic training and exercises.

When an incident occurs, standardized procedures are used to:

- Identify resource requirements,
- Order and acquire resources, and
- Mobilize resources.

Standardized Approach to Resource Management

NIMS establishes a standardized approach for managing resources before, during, and after an incident. This standardized approach is based on the underlying concepts:

- **Consistency:** A method for identifying, acquiring, allocating, and tracking resources.
- **Standardization:** Systems for classifying resources to improve the effectiveness of mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements.
- **Coordination:** To facilitate the integration of resources for optimal benefit.
- **Use:** Of all available resources from all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector, where appropriate.
- **Information Management:** Integrates **communications and information management** elements into its organizations, processes, technologies, and decision support.
- **Credentialing:** Criteria that ensure consistent training, licensure, and certification standards.

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Planning

Jurisdictions should work together in advance of an incident to develop plans for identifying, ordering, managing, and employing resources.

Use of Agreements

Agreements among all parties providing or requesting resources help to enable effective and efficient resource management during incident operations.

Resource Identification and Ordering

The resource management process uses standardized methods to identify, order, mobilize, and track the resources required to support incident management activities. Identification and ordering of resources are intertwined.

Effective Resource Management: Acquisition Strategies

Effective resource management includes establishing resource acquisition procedures. It is important to consider the tradeoffs (e.g., shelf life, warehousing costs) and determine the optimal acquisition strategies.

Effective Resource Management: Systems and Protocols

- **Systems:** Management information systems collect, update, and process resource data and track the status and location of resources.
- **Protocols:** Preparedness organizations develop standard protocols to request resources, prioritize requests, activate and mobilize resources to incidents, and return resources to normal status.

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Managing Resources

It is important to remember that preparedness activities must occur on a continual basis to ensure that resources are ready for mobilization. The following is based on a standardized seven-step cycle for managing resources during an incident.

1. **Identify Requirements:** When an incident occurs, personnel who have resource management responsibilities should continually identify, refine, and validate resource requirements.
 - a. **Flow of Requests and Assistance during Large-Scale Incidents.**
 - i. The Incident Command/Unified Command identifies resource requirements and requests resources to the local and State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
 - ii. Local EOC fulfills the need or requests assistance through mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements with private-sector and nongovernmental organizations.
 - iii. Local resources and local mutual aid and assistance agreements will provide the first line of emergency response and incident management.
 - iv. If the State cannot meet the needs, they may arrange support from another State through an agreement, such as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).
 - v. If additional resources and/or capabilities are required beyond those available through interstate agreements, the Governor may ask the President for Federal assistance.
 - vi. Federal assistance may be provided under various Federal authorities. If a Governor requests a disaster declaration, the President will consider the entirety of the situation including damage assessments and needs. The President may declare a major disaster (section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act).
2. **Order & Acquire:** Standardized resource-ordering procedures are used when requests for resources cannot be fulfilled locally. Typically, these requests are forwarded first to an adjacent locality or sub-state region and then to the State. Mutual aid and assistance resources will be mobilized only with the consent of the jurisdiction that is being asked to provide the requested resources.
 - a. **Avoid Bypassing Systems**
 - i. Those responsible for managing resources, including public officials, should recognize that reaching around the official resource coordination process within the Multiagency Coordination System supporting the incident(s) creates serious problems.

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3. **Mobilize:** Incident resources mobilize as soon as they are notified through established channels. When resources arrive on scene, they must be formally checked in.
 - a. Mobilization and Demobilization Managers should plan and prepare for the demobilization process at the same time that they begin the resource mobilization process, or right after the first resources are ready to be released.
 - b. Early planning for demobilization facilitates accountability and makes the logistical management of resources as efficient as possible—in terms of both costs and time of delivery.

4. **Track & Report:** Resource tracking is a standardized, integrated process conducted prior to, during, and after an incident.
 - a. Resources are tracked using established procedures continuously from mobilization through demobilization.

5. **Recover/Demobilize**
 - a. **Recovery** involves the final disposition of all resources, including those located at the incident site and at fixed facilities. During this process, resources are rehabilitated, replenished, disposed of, and/or retrograded.
 - b. **Demobilization** is the orderly, safe, and efficient return of an incident resource to its original location and status and demobilization planning should begin as soon as possible to facilitate accountability of the resources

6. **Reimbursement:** Provides a mechanism to recoup funds expended for incident-specific activities. Consideration should be given to reimbursement agreements prior to an incident. Processes for reimbursement play an important role in establishing and maintaining the readiness of resources.

7. **Inventory:** Preparedness organizations should inventory and maintain current data on their available resources. The data are then made available to communications/dispatch centers, Emergency Operations Centers, and other organizations within the Multiagency Coordination System.
 - a. **Identifying and Typing Resources** is categorizing, by capability, the resources requested, deployed, and used in incidents.

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Credentialing

The credentialing process involves an objective evaluation and documentation of an individual's:

- Current certification, license, or degree,
- Training and experience, and
- Competence or proficiency.

Credentialing personnel ensures that they meet nationally accepted standards and are able to perform specific tasks under specific conditions.

Credentialing Process

The process begins with the department/agency deciding to participate in the credentialing effort. Next the department/ agency selects members to participate in the credentialing effort.

The department/agency submits each individual's application to an authorized credentialing agency. That credentialing agency determines if the individual is qualified for the applied-for credential(s).

Lesson 5: NIMS Command and Management Related NIMS Document Section

What Is NIMS Command and Management?

The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of incidents.

The final Command and Management element is Public Information. Public Information includes processes, procedures, and organizational structures required to gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate information – information that is essential for lifesaving response and community recovery.

Understanding Command and Coordination

Both elements are essential to ensuring a successful response. Remember that:

- **Command** is the act of directing, ordering, or controlling by virtue of explicit statutory, regulatory, or delegated authority at the field level.
- **Coordination** is the process of providing support to the command structure and may include incident prioritization, critical resource allocation, communications systems integration, and information exchange.

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Command and Management Elements

NIMS Command and Management component facilitates incident management. This component includes the following elements: Incident Command System, Multiagency Coordination Systems, and Public Information.

Incident Command System - What Is ICS?

ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that:

- Allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a **common organizational structure**.
- Enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private.
- Establishes common processes for planning and managing resources.

ICS: Not Just for Large-Scale Incidents

ICS is flexible and can be used for incidents of any type, scope, and complexity. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents. NIMS prompts the use of ICS for every incident or scheduled event. Using ICS on all incidents helps hone and maintain skills needed for the large-scale incidents.

Management Characteristics

Incident response communications (during exercises and actual incidents) should feature plain language commands so they will be able to function in a multijurisdictional environment.

ICS is based on 14 proven management characteristics that contribute to the strength and efficiency of the overall system.

1. **Common Terminology:** ICS establishes common terminology that allows diverse incident management and support organizations to work together across a wide variety of incident management functions and hazard scenarios. This common terminology covers the following:
 - a. **Organizational Functions:** Major functions and functional units with incident management responsibilities are standard and consistent.
 - b. **Resource Descriptions:** Major resources—including personnel, facilities, and major equipment and supply items—that support incident management activities are given common names and are “typed” with respect to their capabilities.
 - c. **Incident Facilities:** Common terminology is used to designate the facilities in the vicinity of the incident area that will be used during the incident.

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2. **Modular Organization:** The ICS organizational structure develops in a modular fashion based on the size and complexity of the incident, as well as the specifics of the hazard environment created by the incident. Responsibility for the establishment and expansion of the ICS modular organization ultimately rests with Incident Command.
3. **Management by Objectives:** Is communicated throughout the entire ICS organization and includes:
 - a. Establishing overarching incident objectives.
 - b. Developing strategies based on overarching incident objectives.
 - c. Developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols.
 - d. Establishing specific, measurable tactics or tasks for various incident management functional activities, and directing efforts to accomplish them, in support of defined strategies.
 - e. Documenting results to measure performance and facilitate corrective actions.
4. **Incident Action Planning (IAP):** Provides a concise, coherent means of capturing, communicating and **establishing the overall incident priorities, objectives, strategies and tactics in the contexts of both operational and support activities.**
5. **Manageable Span of Control:** Is key to effective and efficient incident management. In ICS, the span of control of any individual with incident management supervisory responsibility should range from 3 to 7 subordinates, with 5 being optimal.
6. **Incident Facilities and Locations:** Various types of operational support facilities are established in the vicinity of an incident. Typical designated facilities include Incident Command Posts, Bases, Camps, Staging Areas, mass casualty triage areas, point- of-distribution sites, and others as required.
7. **Comprehensive Resource Management:** Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date picture of resource utilization is a critical component of incident management and emergency response. Resources to be identified in this way include personnel, teams, equipment, supplies, and facilities.
8. **Integrated Communications:** Are facilitated through the development and use of a common communications plan and interoperable communications processes and architectures. Preparedness planning should address the equipment, systems, and protocols necessary to achieve integrated voice and data communications.

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9. **Establishment and Transfer of Command:** The command function must be clearly established from the beginning of incident operations. When command is transferred, the process must include a briefing that captures all essential information for continuing safe and effective operations.
10. **Chain of Command and Unity of Command**
 - a. **Chain of Command:** Is the orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization.
 - b. **Unity of Command:** Is when all individuals have a designated supervisor to whom they report at the scene of the incident.
11. **Unified Command:** Allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.
12. **Accountability:** Resource accountability at all jurisdictional levels and within individual functional areas during incident operations is essential.
13. **Dispatch/Deployment:** Resources should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority through established resource management systems. Spontaneous deployment is not encouraged to avoid overburdening the recipient and compounding accountability challenges.
14. **Information and Intelligence Management:** The incident management organization must establish a process for gathering, analyzing, assessing, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.

Incident Commander and Responsibilities

A single Incident Commander is designated with overall incident management responsibility by the appropriate single jurisdictional authority.

The Incident Commander is the individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and the release of resources. The Incident Commander has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site.

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Unified Command

As an incident expands in complexity, Unified Command may be established. In Unified Command, individuals designated by their jurisdictional or organizational authorities (or by departments within a single jurisdiction) work together to:

- Determine objectives, strategies, plans, resource allocations, and priorities.
- Execute integrated incident operations and maximize the use of assigned resources.

Advantages of Using Unified Command

Unified Command enables all agencies with responsibility to manage an incident together by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies.

No agency's legal authorities are compromised or neglected. The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single IAP.

Area Command

Is an organization to oversee the management of multiple incidents handled individually by separate ICS organizations.

An Area Command is activated **only if necessary**, depending on the complexity of the incident and incident management span-of-control considerations. Area Commands are particularly beneficial to incidents that are typically not site specific, are not immediately identifiable, are geographically dispersed, and evolve over longer periods of time (e.g., public health emergencies, earthquakes, tornadoes, civil disturbances). Incidents such as these, as well as acts of biological, chemical, radiological, and nuclear terrorism, require a coordinated intergovernmental, nongovernmental, and private-sector response, with large-scale coordination typically conducted at a higher jurisdictional level.

Incident Command Post

The incident Command and Management organization is located at the Incident Command Post (ICP). Incident Command directs operations from the ICP, which is generally located at or in the immediate vicinity of the incident site. Typically, one ICP is established for each incident.

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Command Staff

The Command Staff typically includes the following personnel:

- The **Public Information Officer** interfaces with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements.
- The **Safety Officer** monitors incident operations and advises the Incident Commander/Unified Command on all matters relating to operational safety, including the health and safety of emergency responder personnel.
- The **Liaison Officer** is the point of contact for representatives of other governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

Additional Command Staff positions may be added depending upon incident needs and requirements.

General Staff (Section Chiefs)

The General Staff are incident management personnel organized according to function and consists of the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief. The General Staff report to the Incident Commander

Operations Section

The Operations Section is responsible for all tactical activities focused on reducing the immediate hazard, saving lives and property, establishing situational control, and restoring normal operations.

Operations Section Chief: Is responsible to Incident Command for the direct management of all incident-related tactical activities. The Operations Section Chief will establish tactics for the assigned operational period.

- **Branches:** Branches may serve several purposes and may be functional, geographic, or both, depending on the circumstances of the incident.
- **Divisions and Groups:** Divisions and/or Groups are established when the number of resources exceeds the manageable span of control of Incident Command and the Operations Section Chief.
- **Resources:** Resources may be organized and managed in three different ways, depending on the requirements of the incident:
 - **Single Resources:** These are individual personnel, supplies, or equipment and any associated operators.
 - **Task Forces:** These are any combination of resources assembled in support of a specific mission or operational need.

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- **Strike Teams:** These are a set number of resources of the same kind and type that have an established minimum number of personnel.

Planning Section

The Planning Section collects, evaluates, and disseminates incident situation information and intelligence for the Incident Commander/Unified Command and incident management personnel. This Section then prepares status reports, displays situation information, maintains the status of resources assigned to the incident, and prepares and documents the Incident Action Plan. The Planning Section is comprised of four primary units, as well as a number of technical specialists to assist in evaluating the situation, developing planning options, and forecasting requirements for additional resources. These primary units that fulfill functional requirements are:

- **Resources Unit:** Responsible for recording the status of resources committed to the incident and anticipating resource needs.
- **Situation Unit:** Responsible for the collection, organization, and analysis of incident status information, and for analysis of the situation as it progresses.
- **Demobilization Unit:** Responsible for ensuring orderly, safe, and efficient demobilization of incident resources.
- **Documentation Unit:** Responsible for collecting, recording, and safeguarding all documents relevant to the incident.
- **Technical Specialist(s):** Personnel with special skills that can be used anywhere within the ICS organization.

Logistics Section

The Logistics Section is responsible for all service support requirements needed to facilitate effective and efficient incident management, including ordering resources from off-incident locations. This Section also provides facilities, security (of the Incident Command facilities), transportation, supplies, equipment maintenance and fuel, food services, communications and information technology support, and emergency responder medical services, including inoculations, as required.

Logistics Section has six primary units that fulfill the functional requirements:

- **Supply Unit:** Orders, receives, stores, and processes all incident-related resources, personnel, and supplies.
- **Ground Support Unit:** Provides all ground transportation during an incident.
- **Facilities Unit:** Sets up, maintains, and demobilizes all facilities used in support of incident operations.
- **Food Unit:** Determines food and water requirements, plans menus, orders food, provides cooking facilities, cooks, serves, maintains food service areas, and manages food security and safety concerns.

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- **Communications Unit:** Major responsibilities include effective communications planning as well as acquiring, setting up, maintaining, and accounting for communications equipment.
- **Medical Unit:** Responsible for the effective and efficient provision of medical services to incident personnel.

Finance/Administration Section

A Finance/Administration Section is established when the incident management activities require on-scene or incident-specific finance and other administrative support services. Some of the functions are: recording personnel time, maintaining vendor contracts, compensation and claims, and conducting an overall cost analysis for the incident.

Within the Finance/Administration Section, four primary units fulfill functional requirements:

- **Compensation/Claims Unit:** Responsible for financial concerns resulting from property damage, injuries, or fatalities at the incident.
- **Cost Unit:** Responsible for tracking costs, analyzing cost data, making estimates, and recommending cost-saving measures.
- **Procurement Unit:** Responsible for financial matters concerning vendor contracts.
- **Time Unit:** Responsible for recording time for incident personnel and hired equipment.

Incident Management Teams

An Incident Management Team (IMT) is an incident command organization made up of the Command and General Staff members and appropriate functional units in an ICS organization and can be deployed or activated, as needed.

Multiagency Coordination Systems

A Multiagency Coordination System is not simply a physical location or facility but rather is a process that allows all levels of government and all disciplines to work together more efficiently and effectively.

Multiagency Coordination System is the architecture to support coordination for incident prioritization, critical resources allocation, communications systems integration, and information coordination.

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Examples of System Elements

Multiagency coordination provides critical resource and information analysis support to the Incident Command/Unified Command. Common coordination elements may include:

- **Dispatch Center:** A Dispatch Center coordinates the acquisition, mobilization, and movement of resources as ordered by the Incident Command/Unified Command.
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC):** An EOC supports the on-scene response by relieving the burden of external coordination and securing additional resources. EOC core functions include coordination; communications; resource allocation and tracking; and information collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- **Department Operations Center (DOC):** A DOC coordinates an internal agency incident management and response. A DOC is linked to and, in most cases, physically represented in the EOC by authorized agent(s) for the department or agency.
- **Multiagency Coordination (MAC) Group:** A MAC Group is comprised of administrators/executives, or their designees, who are authorized to represent or commit agency resources and funds. A MAC Group does not have any direct incident involvement and will often be located some distance from the incident site(s) or may even function virtually.

Public Information

Public Information consists of the processes, procedures, and systems to communicate timely, accurate, and accessible information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation to the public, responders, and additional stakeholders (both directly affected and indirectly affected).

Public Information must be coordinated and integrated across jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations; among Federal, State, tribal, and local governments; and with nongovernmental organizations and the private sector.

Public Information Officer

The Public Information Officer supports the incident command structure as a member of the Command Staff. Public Information Officers are able to create coordinated and consistent messages by collaborating to:

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Joint Information System

- Provides the framework for organizing, integrating and coordinating the delivery of public information into a cohesive organization to ensure timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines with nongovernmental organizations and the private sector.
- Includes the plans, protocols, and procedures used to provide public information.

Federal, State, tribal, territorial, regional, or local Public Information Officers and established Joint Information Centers (JICs) are critical supporting elements of the JIS.

Joint Information Center is:

- A central location that facilitates operation of the Joint Information System
- A location where personnel with public information responsibilities perform critical emergency information functions, crisis communications, and public affairs functions.

Lesson 6: Additional NIMS Elements and Resources Related NIMS Document

National Integration Center

HSPD-5 required the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a mechanism for ensuring the ongoing management and maintenance of NIMS.

The Secretary established the National Integration Center (NIC) to serve as an asset for government agencies, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations that are implementing NIMS.

NIC Responsibilities

The NIC is responsible for the following functions:

- Administration and Compliance
- Standards and Credentialing
- Training and Exercise Support
- Publication Management

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NIC Administration and Compliance

To manage ongoing administration and implementation of NIMS, including specification of compliance measures, the NIC is responsible for performing the following functions:

- Promoting compatibility between national-level standards for NIMS and those developed by other public, private, and professional groups.
- Developing assessment criteria for the various components of NIMS, as well as compliance requirements and timelines.
- Facilitating the establishment and maintenance of a documentation and database system related to qualification, certification, and credentialing of emergency management/response personnel and organizations.
- Developing and maintaining a national program for NIMS education and awareness.

Standards and Credentialing

The NIC will work with appropriate standards development organizations to ensure the adoption of common national standards and credentialing systems that are compatible and aligned with the implementation of NIMS. The standards apply to the identification, adoption, and development of common standards and credentialing programs.

Training and Exercise Support

The NIC will coordinate with them to do the following:

- Facilitate the definition of general training requirements and the development of national-level training standards and course curricula associated with NIMS.
- Facilitate the development of national standards, guidelines, and protocols for incident management training and exercises, including consideration of existing exercise and training programs at all jurisdictional levels.
- Facilitate the development of training necessary to support the incorporation of NIMS across all jurisdictional levels.
- Establish and maintain a repository for reports and lessons learned from actual incidents, training, and exercises, as well as for best practices, model structures, and processes for NIMS-related functions.

Publication Management

Publication management for NIMS includes the development of naming and numbering conventions, the review and certification of publications, development of methods for publications control, identification of sources and suppliers for publications and related services, management of publication distribution, and assurance of product accessibility.

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Supporting Technologies

NIMS relies on scientifically based technical standards that support incident management. Ongoing development of science and technology supports the continual improvement and refinement of NIMS. Strategic research and development ensures that this development takes place.

NIMS Summary

NIMS is a comprehensive nationwide framework developed through a consensus process based on incident management best practices proven by thousands of responders.

NIMS is about unifying how we respond.

In time of crisis, our communities and country count on us to be able to work together as a team. We all must commit to a common way of doing business. And that way of doing business is NIMS.