

**RACES Training  
ICS and the NIMS System  
October 21, 2004**

**Presented by: Carrie Little, KD5GYW – 593**

It is imperative for all RACES operators to be familiar with the Incident Command System (ICS). Garland RACES has provided basic ICS training both last year, and just two weeks ago. You should be familiar with the ICS organization. So for review, ICS is a management tool for direction, control and coordination of response agencies to an incident. By using a common management tool, individual agencies responding to an incident may better coordinate the efforts of stabilizing the incident and protecting life, property, and the environment.

The ICS is built around five major functions: command, operations, planning, logistics and finance/administration. Everyone should be familiar with the responsibilities for each of the functions. I would like to explain to you now, the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

**What is NIMS?**

NIMS is a core set of concepts, principles, and terminology to be use for incident command and multi-agency coordination. Established in Homeland Security Presidential Directive Five (5), NIMS provides a “consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State, tribal, and local government to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity.”

What NIMS is:

NIMS is a core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes. It is applicable to all hazards.

What NIMS is not:

NIMS is not an operational incident management plan, a resource allocation plan, a terrorism/WMD specific plan or designed to address international events.

NIMS is built on three key concepts:

- **Flexibility:** It is applicable regardless of incident cause, size, location, or complexity.
- **Standardization:** It is the key to interoperability. Additionally, a set of standards for NIMS compliance is currently being developed.
- **Ongoing Support:** A NIMS Integration Center has been developed to work towards nationwide implementation by 2007.

### *How is NIMS Organized?*

NIMS is built around six components: Command and Management; Preparedness; Resource Management; Communications and Information Management; Supporting Technologies; and Ongoing Management and Maintenance. These six components make up the entire NIMS System.

#### *Command and Management*

NIMS utilizes the Incident Command System for incident management. This management system is designed to integrate resources from numerous organizations into a single response structure using common terminology and processes. NIMS also speaks to utilization of Unified Command. Under unified command federal, state, local, and non-governmental entities with overlapping jurisdiction and incident management responsibilities are incorporated to work towards overall incident management together.

The role of Multiagency Coordination Systems is also discussed. Essentially the role of the EOC is included in NIMS. The EOC is the physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management activities normally takes place. NIMS specifies that EOCs should always include the following core functions: coordination; communications; resource dispatch and tracking; and information collection, analysis and dissemination.

#### *Preparedness*

Preparedness speaks to a continuous cycle of planning, training, equipping, exercising, evaluation, and taking corrective action. It is linked directly to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8. The preparedness initiative includes processes for providing guidelines; protocols; standards for planning, training, qualifications and certification; and publication management. Mitigation activities are important elements of preparedness.

Preparedness activities include training and exercising to maintain readiness. Appropriate training will be required for organizations and personnel at all levels of government, private sector participants, as well as non-governmental organizations. The NIMS Integration Center will be the key to training and training standards.

Preparedness also includes a system for certification of personnel and equipment. This is probably the most complex and problematic issue related to implementation of NIMS. NIMS will eventually provide equipment standards, guidelines and protocols. Additionally, NIMS will publish certified equipment lists. These equipment lists will be developed in conjunction with federal, state, local, tribal, private sector, non-governmental agencies and accrediting organizations.

### *Resource Management*

NIMS resource management is related to a uniform method of identifying, typing, inventorying, ordering, acquiring, allocating, and tracking resources. The mobilization of resources will also be addressed. While the resource management system is currently not complete, the NIMS Integration Center is working diligently towards publishing more information on this subject.

### *Communications and Information Management*

NIMS was developed to provide a common operating picture accessible across jurisdictions and functional agencies. This will allow incident managers at all levels to make effective, consistent decisions efficiently. It will help to ensure consistency at all levels of incident management. Common communications and data standards will be developed to assure accessibility and interoperability.

### *Supporting Technologies*

NIMS will provide capabilities essential to incident management. This includes addressing interoperability and compatibility. Establishing technology support and technology standards. Additionally, strategic planning will be implemented for research and development activities.

### *Ongoing Management and Maintenance*

The NIMS Integration Center is tasked with several responsibilities. These include:

- Developing a national program for NIMS education and awareness
- Establishing general training requirements and national-level training standards and course curricula
- Publishing national standards, guidelines, and protocols for qualification and certification of emergency responder and incident management personnel
- Documenting standards for performance, compatibility, and interoperability of incident management equipment
- Serving as a repository for lessons learned

### **What is the timeline for implementation?**

Current federal grant guidelines for receipt of Department of Homeland Security funds indicate that an organization must comply with NIMS. The NIMS Integration Center has published a timeframe “ramping up” compliance with full compliance not expected until FY 2007, which begins on October 1, 2006. To the maximum extent possible, organizations are encouraged to achieve full NIMS implementation and institutionalization across the entire response system during FY 2005. Not all of the information to achieve full compliance is currently available. Additional information will be published from the NIMS Integration Center.

**How can I get trained?**

FEMA has developed an on-line independent study course: National Incident Management System Course, IS-700, FEMA

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>

This course is available 24-hours a day via the web. You may download course materials from this site. However, for course completion to be achieved, you must take a “final” test. Upon successful completion of the program, a certificate will be issued indicating comprehension of NIMS.

For more information specific to NIMS you can log on to the NIMS website at:

[www.fema.gov/nims](http://www.fema.gov/nims)

GRACIES