NIMS *Basic*

Introduction and Overview

I. Purpose:	This document provides introductory NIMS information and an overview of the topics covered by the *NIMS Basic* document set.
II. Scope:	NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable Federal, State, local, and tribal governments and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to work together effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity, including acts of catastrophic terrorism.
A. Background	While most incidents are generally handled on a daily basis by a single jurisdiction at the local level, there are important instances in which successful domestic incident management operations depend on the involvement of multiple jurisdictions, functional agencies, and emergency responder disciplines. These instances require effective and efficient coordination across this broad spectrum of organizations and activities. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, much has been done to improve prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation capabilities and coordination processes across the country. A comprehensive national approach to incident management, applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines, would: • Further improve the effectiveness of emergency response providers and incident management organizations across a full spectrum of potential incidents and hazard scenarios. • Also improve coordination and cooperation between public and private entities in a variety of domestic incident management activities.

B. HSPD-5	HSPD-5:
	
	• Issued by the President on February 28, 2003.
	
	• Directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer NIMS.
	
	• Requires all Federal departments and agencies to:
	   o Adopt the NIMS.
	   o Use it in their individual domestic incident management and

emergency prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation programs and activities.

  o Use it in support of all actions taken to assist State, local, or tribal entities.

  o Make adoption of the NIMS by State and local organizations a condition for Federal preparedness assistance (through grants, contracts, and other activities) beginning in FY 2005.

- Requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a NRP that integrates Federal government domestic prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery plans into a single, all-disciplines, all-hazards plan.

C. NRP

The NRP uses the comprehensive framework provided by the NIMS to provide the structure and mechanisms for:

- National-level policy and operational direction for Federal support to State, local, and tribal incident managers.

- Exercising direct Federal authorities and responsibilities as appropriate under the law.

D. NIMS Compliance

Jurisdictional compliance with certain aspects of the NIMS will be possible in the short term, such as adopting the basic tenets of the ICS identified in the NIMS document.

Other aspects of the NIMS such as data and communications systems interoperability, however, will require additional development and refinement to enable compliance at a future date.

E. NIMS Basic

This series of documents is extracted from FEMA 501, *National Incident Management System* and contains a bullet item reformat of text extracted from the original document. Each document is one chapter or appendix from the NIMS, and uses the same wording to allow easy comparison of the documents. Always refer to the NIMS in case of questions or conflicting information.

NIMS Basic is organized with the purpose, scope, and definitions at the front of the document. The *Process* section follows and contains the main body of the document. References and supersedure information are at the end.

III. Table of Contents:

IV. Definitions:

emergency response providers	The term as defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Section 2(6) includes the following Federal, State, local, and related personnel, agencies, and authorities. (6 U.S.C. 101(6)) • Emergency public safety. • Law enforcement. • Emergency response. • Emergency medical (including hospital emergency facilities).
FY	Fiscal Year
HSPD-5	Homeland Security Presidential Directive - 5, *Management of Domestic Incidents*

ICS	Incident Command System

incidents	This can include:

- Acts of terrorism.
- Wildland and urban fires.
- Floods.
- Hazardous materials spill.
- Nuclear accidents.
- Aircraft accidents.
- Earthquakes.
- Hurricanes.
- Tornadoes.
- Typhoons.
- War-related disasters.
- etc.

local government	Defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Section 2(10) as:

- County.
- Municipality.
- City.
- Town.
- Township.
- Local public authority.
- School district
- Special district.
- Intrastate district.
- Council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law).
- Regional or interstate government entity.
- Agency or instrumentality of a local government.
- An Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization.
- In Alaska, a Native village or Alaska Regional Native Corporation.
- A rural community.
- Unincorporated town or village.
- Other public entity.

(6 U.S.C. 101(10))

NIC	NIMS Integration Center

NIMS	FEMA 501, *National Incident Management System*
NRP	FEMA 510, *National Response Plan*
State	Defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 as:

- Any State of the United States.
- The District of Columbia.
- The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.
- The Virgin Islands.
- Guam.
- American Samoa.
- The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- Any possession of the United States.

(6 U.S.C. 101(14))

V. Process:

The NIMS uses a systems approach to integrate the best of existing processes and methods into a unified national framework for incident management. This framework forms the basis for interoperability and compatibility that will, in turn, enable a diverse set of public and private organizations to conduct well-integrated and effective incident management operations.

1. Core Set

NIMS enables effective, efficient, and collaborative incident management at all levels through a core set of:

- Concepts.
- Doctrine.
- Principles.
- Procedures.
- Organizational processes.
- Terminology.
- Technologies.
- Standards requirements applicable to a broad community of NIMS users.

a) HSPD-5	HSPD-5 identifies the core set as:

- The ICS.
- Multiagency coordination systems.
- Unified command.
- Training.
- Identification and management of resources, including systems for classifying types of resources.
- Qualifications and certification.
- Collection, tracking, and reporting of incident information and incident resources.

2. NIMS	The NIMS document:

- Establishes the basic elements of the NIMS and provides mechanisms for the further development and refinement of supporting national standards, guidelines, protocols, systems, and technologies.

- Is not an operational incident management or resource allocation plan.

- Builds on the foundation provided by existing incident management and emergency response systems used by jurisdictions and functional disciplines at all levels.

- Integrates best practices that have proven effective over the years into a comprehensive framework for use by incident management organizations in an all-hazards context (terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other emergencies) nationwide.

- Sets in motion the mechanisms necessary to leverage new technologies and adopt new approaches that will enable continuous refinement of the NIMS over time.

- Was developed through a collaborative, intergovernmental partnership with significant input from the incident management functional disciplines, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations.

- Provides for interoperability and compatibility among Federal, State, and local capabilities.

B. Concepts and Principles	The NIMS is based on an appropriate balance of flexibility and standardization to provide the framework for interoperability and compatibility.

1. Flexibility

The NIMS provides a consistent, flexible, and adjustable national framework within which government and private entities at all levels can work together to manage domestic incidents, regardless of their cause, size, location, or complexity. This flexibility applies across all phases of incident management: prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

2. Standardization

The NIMS provides a set of standardized organizational structures such as the ICS, multiagency coordination systems, and public information systems, as well as requirements for processes, procedures, and systems designed to improve interoperability among jurisdictions and disciplines in various areas, including:

- Training.
- Resource management.
- Personnel qualification and certification.
- Equipment certification.
- Communications and information management.
- Technology support.
- Continuous system improvement.

C. Overview

The NIMS integrates existing best practices into a consistent, nationwide approach to domestic incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines in an all-hazards context.

Six major components make up this systems approach. Each is addressed in a separate *NIMS Basic* document.

Of these components, the concepts and practices for Command and Management and Preparedness are the most fully developed, reflecting their regular use by many jurisdictional levels and agencies responsible for incident management across the country.

- FEMA 501-2, NIMS Basic - Command and Management
- FEMA 501-3, NIMS Basic - Preparedness

The following documents introduce many concepts and requirements that are also integral to the NIMS but that will require further collaborative development and refinement over time.

- FEMA 501-4, NIMS Basic - Resource Management
- FEMA 501-5, NIMS Basic - Communications and Information Management
- FEMA 501-6, NIMS Basic - Supporting Technologies
- FEMA 501-7, NIMS Basic - Ongoing Management and Maintenance

D. NIMS Components

The following synopsis of each major component of the NIMS describes how these components work together as a system to provide the national framework for preparing for, preventing, responding to, and recovering from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

A more detailed discussion of each component is included in the NIMS and the respective *NIMS Basic* document.

1. Command and Management

NIMS standard incident command structures are based on the following three key organizational systems.

a) ICS

The ICS defines the operating characteristics, interactive management components, and structure of incident management and emergency response organizations engaged throughout the life cycle of an incident;

b) Multiagency Coordination Systems

These define the operating characteristics, interactive management components, and organizational structure of supporting incident management entities engaged at the Federal, State, local, tribal, and regional levels through mutual-aid agreements and other assistance arrangements.

c) Public Information Systems

These refer to processes, procedures, and systems for communicating timely and accurate information to the public during crisis or emergency situations.

2. Preparedness

Effective incident management begins with a host of preparedness activities conducted on a "steady-state" basis, well in advance of any potential incident.

Preparedness involves an integrated combination of:

- Planning.
- Training.
- Exercises.
- Personnel qualification and certification standards.
- Equipment acquisition and certification standards.
- Publication management processes and activities.

a) Planning

- Describes how personnel, equipment, and other resources are used to support incident management and emergency response activities.

- Provides mechanisms and systems in support of a full spectrum of incident management requirements for:
  o Setting priorities.
  o Integrating multiple entities and functions.
  o Ensuring that communications and other systems are available and integrated.

b) Training	Includes standard courses on: • Multiagency incident command and management, organizational structure, and operational procedures. • Discipline-specific and agency-specific incident management courses. • The integration and use of supporting technologies.
c) Exercises	Incident management organizations and personnel must participate in realistic exercises, including multidisciplinary, multijurisdictional, and multi-sector interaction, to improve integration and interoperability and optimize resource utilization during incident operations.
d) Personnel Qualification and Certification	Qualification and certification activities are undertaken to identify and publish national-level standards and measure performance against these standards to ensure that incident management and emergency responder personnel are appropriately qualified and officially certified to perform NIMS related functions.
e) Equipment Acquisition and Certification	Incident management organizations and emergency responders at all levels rely on various types of equipment to perform mission essential tasks. The acquisition of equipment that will perform to certain standards, including the capability to be interoperable with similar equipment used by other jurisdictions is a critical component of operational preparedness.
f) Mutual Aid	Mutual-aid agreements are the means for one jurisdiction to provide resources, facilities, services, and other required support to another jurisdiction during an incident. Each jurisdiction should be party to a mutual-aid agreement with appropriate jurisdictions from which they expect to receive or to which they expect to provide assistance during an incident.

g) Publications Management	Publications management refers to:
	
	• Forms and forms standardization.
	
	• Developing publication materials.
	
	• Administering publications, including:
	    o Establishing naming and numbering conventions.
	    o Managing the publication and promulgation of documents.
	    o Exercising control over sensitive documents.
	
	• Revising publications when necessary.

3. Resource Management	The NIMS defines standardized mechanisms and establishes requirements for processes to describe, inventory, mobilize, dispatch, track, and recover resources over the life cycle of an incident.

4. Communications and Information Management	The NIMS identifies the requirement for a standardized framework at all levels of incident management for: • Communications. • Information management (collection, analysis, and dissemination). • Information-sharing.
a) Incident Management Communications	Incident management organizations must ensure that effective, interoperable communications processes, procedures, and systems exist to support a wide variety of incident management activities across agencies and jurisdictions.
b) Information Management	Information management processes, procedures, and systems help ensure that information, including communications and data, flows efficiently through a commonly accepted architecture supporting numerous agencies and jurisdictions responsible for managing or directing domestic incidents, those impacted by the incident, and those contributing resources to the incident management effort. Effective information management: • Enhances incident management and response. • Helps ensure that those involved in crisis decision-making are better informed.
5. Supporting Technologies	Technology and technological systems provide supporting capabilities essential to implementing and continuously refining the NIMS. These include: • Voice and data communications systems. • Information management systems such as record keeping and resource tracking. • Data display systems. • Specialized technologies that facilitate ongoing operations and incident management activities in situations that call for unique technology-based capabilities.
6. Ongoing Management and Maintenance	This component establishes an activity to provide strategic direction for and oversight of the NIMS, supporting both routine review and the continuous refinement of the system and its components over the long term.

E. Additional Publications

The Secretary of Homeland Security, through the NIC discussed in FEMA 501-7, *NIMS Basic - Ongoing Management and Maintenance*, will:

- Publish separately the standards, guidelines, and compliance protocols for determining whether a Federal, State, local, or tribal entity has adopted the aspects of the NIMS that are in place by October 1, 2004.

- On an ongoing basis, publish additional standards, guidelines, and compliance protocols for the aspects of the NIMS not yet fully developed.

F. Appendices

The appendices to the NIMS provide additional system details regarding the ICS and resource typing. These are also available as:

- FEMA 501-8, *NIMS Basic – The Incident Command System*.
- FEMA 501-9, *NIMS Basic – Resource Typing System*.

VI. References:

FEMA 501, *National Incident Management System*

FEMA 501-1, *NIMS Basic - Introduction and Overview*

FEMA 501-2, *NIMS Basic - Command and Management*

FEMA 501-3, *NIMS Basic - Preparedness*

FEMA 501-4, *NIMS Basic - Resource Management*

FEMA 501-5, *NIMS Basic - Communications and Information Management*

FEMA 501-6, *NIMS Basic - Supporting Technologies*

FEMA 501-7, *NIMS Basic - Ongoing Management and Maintenance*

FEMA 501-8, *NIMS Basic – The Incident Command System*

FEMA 501-9, *NIMS Basic – Resource Typing System*

FEMA 510, *National Response Plan*

Homeland Security Act of 2002

HSPD-5, *Management of Domestic Incidents*

VII. Supersedure:

Original