



National Incident Management System (NIMS) What's New

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) released in December 2008 supersedes the March 2004 version of NIMS. The basic purpose, scope and principles of the document remain unchanged. The majority of changes impact the organization and readability of the document while ensuring that it adequately reflects the importance of preparedness.

The following is a detailed description of the modifications incorporated into the new NIMS document.

OVERALL CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO THE NIMS DOCUMENT

Reorganized the document

The December 2008 version of NIMS reorders the key components to emphasize the role of preparedness and to mirror the progression of an incident. This will aid in alleviating the misperception that NIMS is only the Incident Command System (ICS).

ORDER OF SECTIONS IN 2004 NIMS	ORDER OF SECTIONS IN 2008 NIMS
• Command and Management	• Preparedness
• Preparedness	• Communications and Information Management
• Resource Management	• Resource Management
• Communications and Information Management	• Command and Management
• Supporting Technologies	• Ongoing Management and Maintenance
• Ongoing Management and Maintenance	▪ National Integration Center
	▪ Supporting Technologies

Better integrated nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector

Emergency management and incident response activities should be coordinated among all appropriate agencies and organizations including NGOs and the private sector. To that end, NGOs and the private sector actions have been more fully integrated throughout NIMS.

Clarified the linkages between the National Response Framework (NRF) and NIMS

NIMS and the NRF are designed to improve the Nation's incident management capabilities and efficiency. While the 2004 NIMS explained its linkage to the *National Response Plan*, the 2008 NIMS has been revised to incorporate *NRF* principles to ensure accuracy between the two documents.

Included the term Emergency Management/Response Personnel to promote inclusivity

The term Emergency Management/Response Personnel was added to the document as an all encompassing term to include first responders, emergency managers, and all organizations and individuals in various levels of governments as well as NGOs and private sector organizations with roles in incident management.

Utilized graphics and examples

To help familiarize stakeholders with key NIMS principles, the document was augmented to draw the readers to certain concepts and help them better understand processes. This was accomplished through graphics, tables, call-out boxes and highlighting.

COMPONENT-BY-COMPONENT CHANGES AND ADDITIONS

Preparedness

This component was greatly expanded to highlight the importance of preparedness within NIMS, and define its relationship to all other components. Examples include:

- Additional roles of elected and appointed officials to define their responsibilities prior to and during an incident
- Added key roles of NGOs and private sector, detailing how they should be integrated into preparedness efforts
- Added information on Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Continuity of Government (COG) planning to help ensure the maintenance of essential functions during incidents
- Expanded the linkages between NIMS and other homeland security doctrine with preparedness elements such as the National Preparedness Guidelines, national strategy documents and the NRF
- Expanded information on mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements, describing the various types of agreements and the potential elements they should include

Communications & Information Management

This component was heavily revised to better articulate the importance of communications and information management and is now comprised of three main sections.

- Concepts and Principles section contains the following subsections:
 - Common Operating Picture
 - Interoperability
 - Reliability, Scalability, and Portability
 - Resiliency and Redundancy
- Management Characteristics section contains the following subsections:
 - Standardized communication types
 - Policy and planning for communication systems and platforms
 - Agreements with all parties identified in plans
 - Equipment standards and training

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- Organizations and Operations section contains the following subsections:
 - Incident Information in decision making
 - Communication standards and formats

Resource Management

The majority of the concept and principles within this component remained unchanged; however, clarifying language was added wherever possible to ensure readability. Improvements include:

- Better articulates that the resource management process can be separated into two parts:
 - Preparedness (conducted on a continual basis)
 - Response (managing resources during an incident)
- Graphics depicts the flow of resource requests during large-scale incidents
- New figure outlining the process for determining eligibility for credentialing under NIMS
- Incorporated information from the original resource management appendix (Appendix B in March 2004 NIMS) into main document

Command and Management

Most concepts and principles within this component were not altered. Rather, this Component was revised to add clarity and better explain Command and Management concepts and principles, including:

- Renamed Intelligence/Information function
 - The function was renamed the Intelligence/Investigations function in order to clarify the difference between general and specialized information.
 - The mission of the Intelligence/Investigations function is to ensure that all intelligence and investigative operations, functions, and activities within emergency management and incident response are properly managed, coordinated, and directed.
- Added a new section describing the Incident Complex, which is a mechanism to organize multiple incidents within a close proximity
- Clarified the purpose of Area Command and how it fits into ICS
- Expanded the Multiagency Coordination System (MACS) section to better define the process of Multiagency Coordination and the elements that make up the System
- Replaced the term MAC Entities with MAC Groups
 - Major system elements within MACS now include Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) and communications/dispatch centers.
- Refined the Public Information Section to more clearly discuss the processes, procedures, and systems to communicate timely, accurate, and accessible information on the incident to stakeholders

- Expanded the Public Information Section to include a new portion on the four step process of providing information to the public and stakeholders during an incident

Ongoing Management and Maintenance

As part of the restructuring of the component, the Supporting Technologies chapter of the 2004 NIMS was moved into the Ongoing Management and Maintenance Component in the 2008 version.

The component now consists of the following two sections:

- National Integration Center, which sets forth the following responsibilities:
 - Administration and Compliance
 - Standards and Credentialing
 - Training and Exercise Support
 - Publications Management
- Supporting Technologies, which discusses principles necessary to leverage science and technology to improve capabilities and lower costs

Appendices

The Appendices were reordered and revised to remove redundancies with the main body of the NIMS document. Improvements include:

- Updated Appendix A (Resource Typing) with two examples of typed resources: a single resource and a typed team resource.
- Updated Appendix B (Incident Command System) in the following ways:
 - Expanded and updated explanations and examples relating to ICS
 - Included information on the planning process
 - Removed the example ICS forms
 - Added Tab 10 to provide a quick reference guide for the primary functions of the major ICS positions

For further information on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) see the DHS/FEMA website at www.fema.gov/nims.

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