

NIMS Compliance Metrics Terms of Reference

The definitions below correspond to the questions associated with the State, Territorial, local and tribal NIMS Compliance Activities: Federal Fiscal Year 2007.

Actual Event: A disaster (natural or man-made) that has warranted action to protect life, property, environment, public health or safety. Natural disasters include earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, etc.; man-made (either intentional or accidental) incidents can include chemical spills, terrorist attacks, explosives, biological attacks, etc.

After Action Reports: Reports that summarize and analyze performance in both exercises and actual events. The reports for exercises may also evaluate achievement of the selected exercise objectives and demonstration of the overall capabilities being exercised.

Common Communication Plan (CCP): A plan designed to be utilized across multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional incident management operations. It applies standards called for under the ICS. The IC manages communications at an incident, using a CCP and an incident-based communications center established solely for use by the command, tactical, and support resources assigned to the incident. All entities involved in managing the incident will utilize common terminology, prescribed by the NIMS, for communications.

Common Operating Picture: A broad view of the overall situation as reflected by situation reports, aerial photography, and other information or intelligence. (Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 128; Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 64.)

Constraints/Impediments: Limitations or restrictions in conducting NIMS activities. The following list defines the constraints/impediments:

Education: The knowledge or skill obtained or developed by a learning process.

Equipment: Instrumentality needed for an undertaking or to perform a service including its associated supplies. Equipment can range from small personal items such as search and rescue gear (flashlights, dusk masks, etc.) to large-scale multi-jurisdictional systems (radio repeater systems, computer networks, etc.).

Exercise: Opportunity provided to demonstrate, evaluate, and improve the combined capability and interoperability of elements to perform assigned missions and tasks to standards necessary to achieve successful outcomes. (<http://www.mwcoq.org/uploads/committee-documents/tVtYVlk20051031174251.doc>)

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Federal Standards: Common rules, conditions, guidelines or characteristics, established by the Federal Government.

Funding: Sources of revenue that are allocated or can be allocated (pre-designated emergency funds) to support preparedness initiatives.

Organization: Individual teams, an overall organizational structure, and leadership at each level in the structure that comply with relevant laws, regulations, and guidance necessary to perform assigned missions and tasks. (<http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/tVtYVlk20051031174251.doc>)

Personnel: Paid and volunteer staff who meet required qualification and certification standards necessary to perform assigned missions and tasks. (<http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/tVtYVlk20051031174251.doc>)

Plans: Documents such as procedures, mutual aid agreements, strategies, and other publications that may describe some of the following: governance, management, standard operating procedures, technology, and activities in support of defined missions and tasks. (<http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/tVtYVlk20051031174251.doc>)

Policy: A course of action, guidance, or principle intended to influence and guide decisions, actions, and other matters.

Training: Specialized instruction and practice to improve performance and lead to task proficiency.

Corrective Action Program: A process implemented after incidents or exercises to assess, investigate, and identify and implement appropriate solutions to prevent repeating problems encountered.

Corrective Actions: Improved procedures that are based on lessons learned from actual incidents or from training and exercises.

Critical Infrastructures: Systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters. (Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 64.)

Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC): An interstate mutual aid agreement that was developed out of the need to assist and coordinate resources across states in the event of

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a disaster situation.

(http://training.fema.gov/EMIweb/downloads/EMAC_Full_Precourse_04_14_05.pdf#search)

Emergency Operations Plan (EOP): The “steady-state” plan maintained by various jurisdictional levels for managing a wide variety of potential hazards. (Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 65; Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 129.)

Equipment Acquisition: The process of obtaining resources to support operational needs.

Evaluations: Tools used after exercises or actual events to document strengths and weaknesses in a jurisdiction’s preparedness, e.g., Lessons learned or After Action Reports.

Exercise Types:

Drill: A coordinated, supervised activity usually used to test a single specific operation or function in a single agency. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, develop or test new policies or procedures, or practice and maintain current skills. Typical attributes include the following: A narrow focus, measured against established standards; Instant feedback; Performance in isolation; Realistic environment.

(<http://209.176.175.84/support/Users%20Handbook%20Version%203%20new%206-22.pdf>)

Full Scale Exercise (FSE): A multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-organizational activity that tests many facets of preparedness. They focus on implementing and analyzing the plans, policies, procedures, and cooperative agreements developed in discussion-based exercises and honed in previous, smaller, operations-based exercises. In FSEs, the reality of operations in multiple functional areas presents complex and realistic problems that require critical thinking, rapid problem solving, and effective responses by trained personnel. During FSEs, events are projected through a scripted exercise scenario with built-in flexibility to allow updates to drive activity. FSEs are conducted in a real-time, stressful environment that closely mirrors real events.

(http://209.176.175.84/support/HSEEP%20Vol%20I_Overview%20%20Program%20Mgmt.pdf)

Functional Exercise (FE): An activity designed to test and evaluate individual capabilities, multiple functions, activities within a function, or interdependent groups of functions. Events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at the management level. An FE simulates the reality of operations in a functional area by presenting complex and realistic problems that require rapid and effective responses by trained personnel in a highly stressful environment.

(http://209.176.175.84/support/HSEEP%20Vol%20I_Overview%20%20Program%20Mgmt.pdf)

Tabletop Exercise (TTX): An activity that involves key personnel discussing simulated

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scenarios in an informal setting. This type of exercise can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures or to assess the systems needed to guide the prevention of, response to, and recovery from a defined incident. TTXs typically are aimed at facilitating understanding of concepts, identifying strengths and shortfalls, and achieving changes in attitude. Participants are encouraged to discuss issues in depth and develop decisions through slow-paced problem solving, rather than the rapid, spontaneous decision making that occurs under actual or simulated emergency conditions.

(http://209.176.175.84/support/HSEEP%20Vol%20I_Overview%20%20Program%20Mgmt.pdf)

Federal Preparedness Funding: Funding designated for developing and/or enhancing State, Territorial, local, and tribal preparedness capabilities. This includes all funding streams that directly or indirectly support Homeland Security initiatives, e.g. Center for Disease Control and Health Resources and Services Administration preparedness funds.

Flexibility: A principle of the NIMS that 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. (Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 2.)

Framework: A conceptual structure that supports or contains set of systems and/or practices.

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP): A capabilities- and performance-based exercise program that provides a standardized policy, methodology, and language for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating all exercises. In addition to providing a standardized exercise policy, HSEEP also facilitates the creation of self-sustaining, capabilities-based exercise programs by providing tools and resources such as guidance, training, technology, and direct support. This blended approach to HSEEP implementation promotes exercise expertise, while advancing a standardized means of assessing and improving preparedness across the Nation. (<http://www.hseep.dhs.gov>)

Incident Action Plan (IAP): A plan that contains general management objectives reflecting the overall incident strategy, and specific action plans for the next operational period.

Improvement Plan: The portion of an After Action Report that converts lessons learned from the exercise or incident response into concrete, measurable steps that result in improved response capabilities.

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Incident Command System (ICS): A standardized on-scene emergency management construct specifically designed to provide for the adoption of an integrated organizational structure that reflects the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating with a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents. ICS is used for all kinds of emergencies and is applicable to small as well as large and complex incidents. ICS is used by various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private, or organized field-level incident management operations. (Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 66-67; Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 130.)

Incident-Specific Hazards: Anticipated events that may or may not occur that require coordinated response to protect life or property, e.g., pandemic flu, avian flu, etc.

Interagency: Made up of, involving, or representing two or more different agencies.

Interoperability & Compatibility: A principle of the NIMS that holds that systems must be able to work together and should not interfere with one another if the multiple jurisdictions, organizations, and functions that come together under the NIMS are to be effective in domestic incident management. Interoperability and compatibility are achieved through the use of such tools as common communications and data standards, digital data formats, equipment standards, and design standards. (Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 55.)

Interstate: Made up of, involving, or representing two or more different States.

Intrastate: Existing or occurring within the boundaries of a single State.

Joint Information Center (JIC): A facility established to coordinate all incident-related public information activities. It is the central point of contact for all news media at the scene of the incident. Public information officials from all participating agencies should collocate at the JIC. (Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 68; Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 131.)

Joint Information System (JIS): A system that integrates incident information and public affairs into a cohesive organization designed to provide consistent, coordinated, timely information during a crisis or incident operations. The mission of the JIS is to provide a structure and system for developing and delivering coordinated interagency messages; developing, recommending, and executing public information plans and strategies on behalf of the IC; advising the IC concerning

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public affairs issues that could affect a response effort; and controlling rumors and inaccurate information that could undermine public confidence in the emergency response effort. (Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 68; Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 131.)

Lessons Learned: Knowledge gained through operational experience (actual events or exercises) that improve performance of others in the same discipline.

Measure: A determination of a jurisdiction's specific level of NIMS compliance, evaluated according to that jurisdiction's responses to the NIMS metrics that have been established by the NIMS Integration Center (NIC).

Metric: A nationwide system of assessment developed by the NIC for the purpose of evaluating a jurisdiction's specific level of NIMS compliance. This system consists of a collection of questions derived from the NIMS compliance statements. Answers to these questions are analyzed to determine a jurisdiction's level of compliance with the NIMS.

MultiAgency Coordination System (MACS): A system that provides the architecture to support coordination for incident prioritization, critical resource allocation, communications systems integration, and information coordination. The components of multi-agency coordination systems include facilities, equipment, EOCs, specific multi-agency coordination entities, personnel, procedures, and communications. The systems assist agencies and organizations to fully integrate the subsystems of NIMS. (Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 69; Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 133.)

Mutual Aid Agreement: A written agreement between agencies, organizations, and/or jurisdictions that they will assist one another on request by furnishing personnel, equipment, and/or expertise in a specified manner. (Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 69; Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 133.)

National Response Plan (NRP): A plan mandated by HSPD-5 that integrates Federal domestic prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery plans into one all-discipline, all-hazards plan. (Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 133.)

NIMCAST (National Incident Management System Capability Assessment Support Tool): A web-based self-assessment tool designed to aid State, Territorial, local, and tribal organizations and jurisdictions in determining their capabilities and compliance against the requirements

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established in the recently released National Incident Management System.
(<http://www.fema.gov/nimcast/index.jsp>)

NIMS Adoption: The establishment of a legal authority (e.g. executive order, proclamation, resolution, legislation, or other legal mandate) that requires all departments and agencies operating within the jurisdiction to use NIMS principles and methodologies in their all-hazards incident management system.

NIMS Baseline: An initial assessment of NIMS compliance conducted in 2005 and/or 2006 by participating jurisdictions at State, Territorial, local, and tribal levels.

NIMS Implementation: All activities necessary for adopting and institutionalizing NIMS. Implementation includes the formal adoption of NIMS, the use of a NIMS-compliant approach to all incident management operations, etc.

NIMS National Standard Curriculum: A curriculum designed to provide training on the NIMS. This curriculum will be built around available federal training opportunities and course offerings that support NIMS implementation. The curriculum also will serve to clarify training that is necessary for NIMS-compliance and streamline the training approval process for courses recognized by the curriculum. Initially, the curriculum will be made up of NIMS awareness training and training to support the Incident Command System (ICS). Eventually it will expand to include all NIMS training requirements including training established to meet national credentialing standards.
(<http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nsctd.pdf>)

NIMS Promotion and Encouragement: Activities such as meetings (e.g., conferences, working groups, etc.), mailings (e.g., newsletters, letters, etc.), email, or other established methods (e.g., broadcast media).

No-Notice Events: An event that does not allow for prior planning, e.g., terrorist event, earthquake, etc.

Plain Language: Common terms and definitions that can be understood by individuals from all responder disciplines. The intent of plain language is to ensure the clear and accurate communication of information during an incident.

Preplanned Event: A non-emergency activity. ICS can be used as the management system for a wide range of events, e.g., parades, concerts, or sporting events. (Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 129.)

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Principal Coordinator for Statewide NIMS Implementation: The position designated by the State Administrative Agency (SAA) primarily responsible for coordination of all NIMS-related directives. This includes dissemination and collection of information and monitoring and reporting on compliance activities.

Public Information System: The processes, procedures, and systems for communicating timely and accurate information to the public during crisis or emergency situations. (Department of Homeland Security, The National Incident Management System (March 2004), 3.)

Remedial Action Management Program (RAMP): A program that will identify and remedy operational and programmatic issues encountered in disaster response and recovery operations and exercises. Known as the Remedial Action Management Program (RAMP), it will also capture lessons learned and smart practices that will become part of a Web-based national library accessible to all levels of government...The RAMP replaces the Disaster Corrective Action Program and involves restructured procedures and new issue-management authorities. (<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=3715>)

Resource Typing: Categorizing by capability the resources that incident managers commonly request, deploy, and employ. Measurable standards identifying the capabilities and performance levels of resources serve as the basis for categories. Resource users at all levels identify these standards and then type resources on a consensus basis, with a national-level entity taking the coordinating lead. Resource kinds may be divided into subcategories (types) to define more precisely the resource capabilities needed to meet specific requirements. Resource typing is a continuous process designed to be as simple as possible to facilitate frequent use and accuracy in obtaining needed resources. To allow resources to be deployed and used on a national basis, the NIMS Integration Center is responsible for defining national resource typing standards. (Department of Homeland Security, The National Incident Management System (March 2004), 45-46.)

Resource Typing Standards: Categorization and description of response resources that are commonly exchanged in disasters through mutual aid agreements. The FEMA/NIMS Integration Center Resource typing definitions provide emergency responders with the information and terminology they need to request and receive the appropriate resources during an emergency or disaster.

Response: Activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Response includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. Response also includes the execution of emergency operations plans and of incident mitigation activities designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and other unfavorable outcomes. As

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indicated by the situation, response activities include: applying intelligence and other information to lessen the effects or consequences of an incident; increased security operations; continuing investigations into the nature and source of the threat; ongoing public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and specific law enforcement operations aimed at preempting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity, and apprehending actual perpetrators and bringing them to justice. (Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan (December 2004), 72; Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 136.)

Response Asset Inventory: An inventory of the jurisdiction's resources that have been identified and typed according to NIMS Resource Typing Standards. Development of a Response Asset Inventory requires resource typing of equipment, personnel, and supplies identified in the inventories of State resources.

Response Assets: Resources that include equipment, personnel and supplies that are used in activities that address the effect of an incident.

Scalability: The ability of incident managers to adapt to incidents by either expanding or reducing the resources necessary to adequately manage the incident, including the ability to incorporate multiple jurisdictions and multiple responder disciplines.

Standard Equipment List (SEL): A list issued annually to promote interoperability and standardization across the response community at the local, state, and federal levels by offering a standard reference and a common set of terminology. It is provided to the responder community by the InterAgency Board for Equipment Standardization and Interoperability (IAB). The SEL contains a list of generic equipment recommended by the IAB to organizations in preparing for and responding to all-hazards.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP): A complete reference document that details the procedures for performing a single function or a number of interdependent functions. (Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 36.)

Standardization: A principle of the NIMS that provides a set of standardized organizational structures—such as the Incident Command System (ICS), multi-agency 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 area, including: training; resource management; personnel qualification and certification; equipment certification; communications and information management; technology support; and continuous system improvement. (Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 2.)

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Standardized Terminology: Commonly accepted language that is consistent with policies, plans, or procedures in the NIMS and NRP to facilitate multi-agency, multi-disciplinary or multi-jurisdictional communications during an incident.

Strategy: The general direction selected to accomplish incident objectives set by the Incident Commander. (Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System (March 2004), 137.)

Training Curriculum: A course or set of courses designed to teach personnel specific processes, concepts, or task-oriented skills.