



NIMS Standards Quarterly Brief

This NIMS Standards Update provides current information on standards development efforts relating to the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Standards noted in this publication may generally support NIMS implementation by providing criteria for measuring preparedness and incident management requirements. They may also provide technical specifications for resources and communications and information management systems. Each edition highlights a standards activity, and its relationship to NIMS and benefit to the field.

The National Preparedness Directorate (NPD) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for designating standards appropriate for NIMS users in partnership with recognized standards development organizations (SDOs). Through the work of the Incident Management Systems Integration (IMSI) Division, the NPD monitors the development of standards in partnership with DHS' Science and Technology Directorate, other Federal departments and agencies, and State and local governments.

Information provided in these periodicals is intended for use or reference by the public safety community. The identification of SDO information and activities in these updates is not intended to represent a specific endorsement, promotion or recommendation by FEMA.

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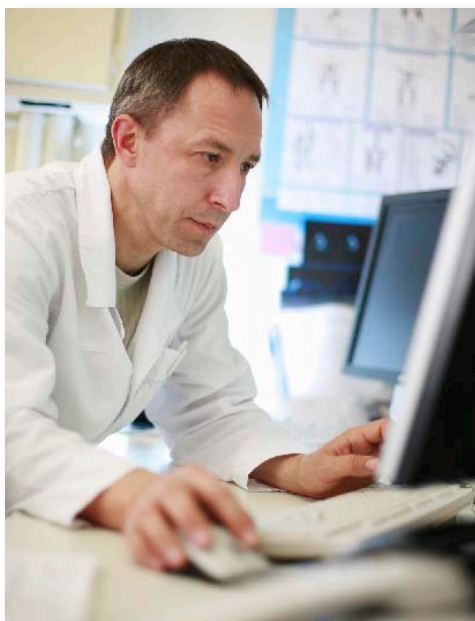
Preparedness/Health Care

The Joint Commission Updates Emergency Management Standards

The Joint Commission, a non-profit organization responsible for accrediting and certifying health care organizations and programs in the United States, recently updated their standards for emergency management based on outcomes from recent incidents, including hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These changes address many aspects of NIMS for hospitals, long-term care facilities and other organizations.

The changes went into effect on January 1, 2008, and are located in the Environment of Care (EC) section of the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals (CAMH). According to the Joint Commission, the revised standards account for “all hazards” emergency planning and the need to exercise these plans on a regular basis. Specifically, the standards provide requirements for the following six critical areas:

1. Standard EC.4.13 – Emergency communications.
2. Standard EC.4.14 – Managing resources and assets.
3. Standard EC.4.15 – Managing safety and security during emergencies.
4. Standard EC.4.16 – Staff roles and responsibilities.
5. Standard EC.4.17 – Managing utilities during emergencies.
6. Standard EC.4.18 – Managing [patient] clinical and support activities during emergencies.



These standards provide context for implementing NIMS in the health care environment, which has been a challenge for health care organizations since the release of NIMS in 2004. The standards also address coordination with local public safety and public health agencies on preparedness planning, training and exercises.

For articles and additional information about these standards, visit: <http://www.jointcommission.org>.

Spotlight on Emergency Data eXchange Language (EDXL) Standards

The Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS) sponsors the Emergency Data Exchange Language (EDXL) initiative, which is designed to allow dissimilar information sharing systems to exchange emergency data effectively. OASIS is developing two new standards in the EDXL effort: Emergency Data Exchange Language – Resource Messaging (EDXL–RM) and Emergency Data Exchange Language – Hospital Availability Exchange (EDXL–HAVE).

EDXL is designed to provide a set of standard formats for XML (eXtensible Markup Language) emergency messages. XML is a data exchange format that is used most commonly in internet data exchanges. The purpose of the Resource Messaging standard is to support the exchange of data pertaining to equipment, supplies, people and teams. This specification is tied to NIMS resource management requirements, and may be used in digital communications as part of requests for and the provision of resources during incidents and planned events. This is achieved through the use of a format that is compatible with any transmission system. EDXL–RM is scheduled to be released in the second quarter of 2008.

The routing of messages that conform to the EDXL–RM standard is addressed by another EDXL standard – the Distribution Element (EDXL–DE).

Communications and Information Management

INCITS Updates Biometric Standard



On January 24, 2008, the InterNational Committee for Information Technology (INCITS) announced the approval of INCITS 398-2008 Information Technology – Common Biometric Exchange Formats Framework (CBEFF). INCITS is responsible for developing standards in the field

of information and communications technologies, encompassing storage, processing, transfer, display, management, organization and retrieval of information.

The CBEFF describes a set of data elements necessary to support biometric technologies in a common way. These data elements can be placed in a single file used to exchange biometric information between different system components or between systems themselves. The result promotes interoperability of biometric-based applications. This newly-approved standard supersedes the 2005 edition and is intended to promote interoperability among biometric-based application programs and systems. Along with general updates and formatting changes, the 2008 edition has updated sections on nested CBEFF structures designed to consolidate data and sections on patron formats, which expand data access information. For additional information, visit <http://www.incits.org>.

APCO Introduces New Communications Training Standard

On September 19, 2007, the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) approved APCO ANS 3.101.1 – 2007: Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Communications Training Officer (CTO). This standard establishes minimum training necessary to foster levels of consistency for training officers that provide instruction to active 9-1-1 operators and telecommunicators. It also promotes the leadership role of the CTO in a public safety communications center and specifies that the CTO shall receive training in Emergency Management, including NIMS and ICS. The standard responds to the needs of the public safety communications industry to ensure base-line literacy requirements in 9-1-1 and Emergency Communications. It also provides guidance in the monitoring and maintenance of training records in all areas of required performance and certifications.

APCO International is a professional organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications. For more information or to download this standard, visit: www.apcostandards.org.



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The Distribution Element standard ensures that key routing information is provided to the resource message such as the distribution type, geography, incident, and sender or recipient identification.

The Hospital AVailability Exchange (EDXL-HAVE) standard uses XML-based exchange to support the sharing of data among hospital services and resources. The standard provides a format for notifying emergency personnel of the status of bed capacity and availability, emergency department status, available service coverage, and the status of a hospital's facility and operations. The purpose of EDXL-HAVE is to allow information to be disseminated efficiently during emergency situations. Emergency dispatch personnel can make clear decisions when looking for the best prepared and available hospital facility. EDXL-HAVE provides a standardized, universal format for sending and receiving data, which is crucial to ensure that victims are cared for in a timely manner. The SDO is developing the standard to be compatible with other EDXL standards, NIMS and the Incident Command Systems (ICS). EDXL-HAVE is scheduled to be released in early 2008.

For further information concerning either standard, visit the OASIS website at: <http://www.oasis-open.org>.

Resource Management

New NFPA Standard Aims to Address Professional Qualifications for Incident Management Personnel

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is developing a new standard "to specify minimum job performance requirements for personnel performing roles within an all hazard incident management system (NFPA 1026, Report on Proposals)." The public comment period on the proposals ended August 31, 2007. The 2009 edition of NFPA 1026: Standard for Incident Management Personnel Professional Qualifications is likely to be released in 2008.

For each of the primary positions within the Incident Command System (ICS) structure, the proposed standard describes general knowledge and skill, as well as job performance requirements. Specific duties are identified for each position along with knowledge and skills required to complete those duties. The proposed standard addresses qualifications for all command and general staff positions, division/group supervisors, strike team/task force leaders, unit leaders, and service and support branch directors. Knowledge of each position within the NIMS ICS framework is a requirement throughout the proposed standard.

For additional information on the development of NFPA 1026, visit: <http://www.nfpa.org>.

Command and Management

NFPA Releases 2008 Edition of Incident Management System Standard

NFPA has released the 2008 edition of the Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System (NFPA 1561). The 2008 edition has been reorganized to make the standard easier to use and better aligns the standard with the Command and Management component of NIMS, including the Incident Command System (ICS) and Multiagency Coordination Systems (MACS).

Definitions and requirements for the command and general staff functions are closely linked to NIMS ICS requirements. For example, the assignment of single resources, task forces and strike teams is provided in section 5.10.1 (Operations Section). The following provides a summary of other notable changes:

- Chapter 4 (System Implementation) includes new requirements that address a system qualification process to ensure personnel are qualified for incident management positions.

- Section 5.4 requires that the intelligence function be established when appropriate.
- New requirements for Unified Command and Area Command are provided under sections 5.5 and 5.6, respectively, along with extensive annex material that includes charts to illustrate both the Unified Command and Area Command organizational structure.

The 2005 edition of NFPA 1561 was placed on the NIMS Recommended Standard List (RSL) in 2007. The new edition will be reviewed by FEMA for consistency with NIMS and to determine its retention on the RSL. For additional information and to track changes to NFPA 1561, visit: <http://www.nfpa.org>.



Homeland Security

ASTM International Focuses on Standard Guides for Homeland Security Applications

ASTM International's Committee on Homeland Security Applications (E54) is scheduled to release numerous NIMS-related standard guides in 2008. ASTM provides a global forum for the development and publication of voluntary consensus standards for materials, products and system services. More than 12,000 ASTM standards are published each year and can be found in the 80 volume *Book of ASTM Standards* or online at: <http://www.astm.org>. The following provides a summary of the 2008 standard guides related to homeland security:

- E2413-04 Standard Guide for Hospital Preparedness and Response – The purpose of this standard is to link hospital emergency requirements with applicable community and state emergency plans. An update to a 2004 edition of the guide is in progress to account for advances in health and medical response capabilities.
- E54.02.05 Standard Practice for Radiological Emergency Response – This document provides standard operating procedures for responders to a radiological hazard. The standard is scheduled for final approval balloting in March 2008.
- E54.02-06 Standard Guide for HAZMAT Team Training, Qualification, and Certification – The development of this guide involved a joint effort with the NFPA Hazardous Materials Response Personnel Committee and resulted in the newly released NFPA 472 and 473 standards (2008 Editions). This guide was completed on January 7, 2008.
- E2511-08 Standard Guide for Stakeholder-Focused Consensus Based Event Restoration Process – This standard addresses the framework and guidance for community involvement and public communications in the restoration of valuable assets that become contaminated as a result of a terrorist incident. This guide was completed and released in August 2007.
- E54.02.10 Standard Guide for Resource Management in Emergency Management and Homeland Security – The purpose of this standard is to guide the planning for and management of emergency response resources. The expected completion date is June 2008.

