

Appendix B: Overview of National Incident Management System

Excerpted from NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
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For complete document go to:
http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/nims_doc_full.pdf

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION.

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 providers¹ and incident management organizations across a full spectrum of potential incidents and hazard scenarios. Such an approach would also improve coordination and cooperation between public and private entities in a variety of domestic incident management activities. For purposes of this document, incidents can include acts of terrorism, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, typhoons, war-related disasters, etc. On February 28, 2003, the President issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5, which directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS). According to HSPD-5: This system will provide a consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State² and local³ governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity to provide for interoperability and compatibility.

1

As defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Section 2(6), "The term 'emergency response providers' includes Federal, State, and local emergency public safety, law enforcement, emergency response, emergency medical (including hospital emergency facilities), and related personnel, agencies, and authorities." 6 U.S.C. 101(6)

2

As defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the term "State" means 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, and any possession of the United States. 6 U.S.C. 101(14).

3

As defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Section 2(10), the term, "local government" means "(A) 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, or agency or

instrumentality of a local government; an Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or in Alaska a Native village or Alaska Regional Native Corporation; and a rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity." 6 U.S.C. 101(10). among Federal, State, and local capabilities, the NIMS will include a core set of concepts, principles, terminology, and technologies covering the incident command system; multiagency coordination systems; unified command; training; identification and management of resources (including systems for classifying types of resources); qualifications and certification; and the collection, tracking, and reporting of incident information and incident resources. 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. 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. It does this through a core set of concepts, principles, procedures, organizational processes, terminology, and standards requirements applicable to a broad community of NIMS users.