



**PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY**
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National Incident Management System (NIMS) General Information

Pennsylvania, along with the Nation, is moving toward the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This is a large task that will take the coordinated efforts of state and local governments, agencies, elected officials, career and volunteer emergency response organizations, law enforcement, public utilities and any other organizations involved in, and supporting preparation, response, recovery and mitigation of all-hazards incidents. To date, there is a fair amount of confusion on what we as a Commonwealth need to do in order to comply with the NIMS. In order for us to meet the stringent timeline for full compliance, we need to come together as one team with one direction and clear guidance on what and how we will achieve our goal. The following guidance will hopefully bring all 67 counties together and clear up any questions and/or confusion.

The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security sent the Governor a letter on September 8, 2004, outlining the requirements to fully comply with the NIMS and states, "In order to receive FY 2006 preparedness funding, the minimum FY 2005 compliance requirements described above must be met. Applicants will be required to certify as part of their FY 2006 grant applications that they have met the FY 2005 NIMS requirements." State departments, commissions and agencies, counties and municipalities need to know that non-compliance with the NIMS requirements will result in partial loss of and/or total loss of the Federal preparedness funding/grants identified in attachment 7, Additional NIMS Information. To preclude jeopardizing future Federal funding, all State departments, commissions and agencies, counties and municipalities must become fully NIMS compliant.

The NIMS system is significant; it integrates effective practices of emergency preparedness, and response, into a comprehensive national framework for incident management. It will enable responders at all levels to work together more effectively to manage domestic incidents no matter what the cause, size or complexity. This is accomplished by:

- Standardized organizational structures, processes and procedures; (ICS)
- Standards for planning, training and exercising, and personnel qualification standards; (Credentialing)
- Equipment acquisition and certification standards; (Resource Typing)
- Interoperable communications procedures and systems;
- Information management systems; and
- Supporting technologies – voice and data communications systems, information systems, and data display systems and specialized technologies.

Questions came up concerning a lot of unknowns as well. This paper will address those questions and provide clearer guidance on the direction Pennsylvania will take to achieve full NIMS compliance.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is going to fully comply with all Federal requirements in adopting the NIMS. In order to meet the aggressive deadlines set by the Federal Government, all state, county and local governments, agencies, elected officials, career and volunteer emergency response organizations, law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, public utilities and any other organizations involved in, and supporting preparation, response, recovery and mitigation of all-hazards incidents, need to establish a timeline for completion of key components of the NIMS. The following paragraph contains the components and deadlines.

All agencies within the Commonwealth, including all state, county and local governments, agencies, elected officials, career and volunteer fire, EMS and/or emergency response organizations, law enforcement, public utilities and any other organizations involved in, and supporting preparation, response, recovery and mitigation of all-hazards incidents, need to complete the following items by September 30, 2005 as stated in the letter to the Governor:

- IS-700 National Incident Command System Awareness course.
- Formally recognizing the NIMS and adopting the NIMS principles and policies.
- Institutionalize the use of the Incident Command System.
- Identify plans, policies and procedures that need to be modified to incorporate the NIMS.
- Establish a timeframe and develop a strategy for full NIMS implementation.
- Establish a NIMS baseline by determining which NIMS requirements you already meet (Completing the NIMCAST will establish a NIMS compliance baseline which will help you establish your timeline).

Requirements to be completed by September 30, 2006:

- Incorporating NIMS into existing training programs and exercises.
- Ensuring that Federal preparedness funding (including DHS Homeland Security Grant Program, Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funds) support NIMS implementation at the State and local levels (in accordance with the eligibility and allowable uses of the grants).
- Incorporating NIMS into Emergency Operations Plans (EOP).
- Promotion of intrastate mutual aid agreements (MAA).
- Coordinating with, and providing technical assistance to, local entities regarding NIMS implementation.

This is an aggressive timeline, however it is reasonable and within reach. Through planning and scheduling, everyone will have the opportunity to complete the training and other requirements; “as a whole”, the minimum requirements for FY’05 have been met and the FY’06 requirements can be met provided everyone puts forth an honest effort and in good faith completes all the NIMS requirements and the required training. For example, say you have 50 people in your organization and 37 have completed the IS700 NIMS Awareness course requirement, and the other 13 are scheduled to attend the IS700 NIMS Awareness course, then your organization may be considered as

meeting that NIMS requirement; Keeping in mind that in good faith the other 13 people will complete the IS700 NIMS Awareness course.

In Summary, it is expected, at a minimum, that all state, county and local governments, agencies and departments, elected officials, career and volunteer emergency response organizations, law enforcement, public utilities and any other organizations involved in, and supporting preparation, response, recovery and mitigation of all-hazards incidents have completed the minimum NIMS compliance requirements and are progressing toward full NIMS compliance. In order to avoid the possibility of federal funding being altered, the above mentioned specific actions must be completed by September 30, 2006.

If there are any inquiries, questions, concerns and/or assistance required, please feel free to contact PEMA's NIMS Information Center at: 1-866-471-7262 or email: RA-EMNIMS@state.pa.us Your questions and concerns are valuable to us and helps provide valuable information to continually update and streamline the NIMS implementation process. Please leave your contact information and your question and/or concern; we will contact you as soon as possible. We would also like to invite you to visit our website www.pema.state.pa.us and click on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for more information on the NIMS.