

TRIBAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL JURISDICTION COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES: FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2006 (OCTOBER 1, 2005-SEPTEMBER 30, 2006)

In March 2004, the Secretary of Homeland Security, at the request of the President, released the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The NIMS is a comprehensive system that improves tribal and local response operations through the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) and the application of standardized procedures and preparedness measures. It promotes development of cross-jurisdictional, statewide, and interstate regional mechanisms for coordinating response and obtaining assistance during a large-scale or complex incident.

Tribal and local authorities, not federal, have the primary responsibility for preventing, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters. The overwhelming majority of emergency incidents are handled on a daily basis by a single jurisdiction at the local level. It is critically important that all jurisdictions comply with the NIMS because the challenges we face as a nation are far greater than the capabilities of any one jurisdiction; they are not, however, greater than the sum of all of us working together through mutual support. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD- 5), *Management of Domestic Incidents*, requires all federal departments and agencies to adopt and implement the NIMS, and requires state¹ and local² jurisdictions to implement the NIMS to receive federal preparedness funding.

NIMS compliance should be considered and undertaken as a community-wide effort. The benefit of NIMS is most evident at the local level, when a community as a whole prepares for and provides an integrated response to an incident. Incident response organizations (to include local public health, public works, emergency management, fire, emergency medical services, law enforcement, hazardous materials, private sector entities, non-governmental organizations, medical organizations, utilities, and others) must work together to comply with NIMS components, policies, and procedures. Implementation of the NIMS in every tribal and local jurisdiction establishes a baseline capability that once established nationwide, can be used as a foundation upon which more advanced homeland security capabilities can be built.

Small and/or rural jurisdictions will benefit from a regional approach. In many instances smaller communities may not have the resources to implement all elements of NIMS on their own. However, by working together with other localities in their regions, these jurisdictions will be able to pool their resources to implement NIMS.

¹ 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, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any possession of the United States." 6 U.S.C. 101 (14)

² 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... 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)

When NIMS is fully implemented, your local community or jurisdiction will be able to:

- Ensure common and proven incident management doctrine, practices, and principles are used to plan for, protect against, respond to, and recover from emergency incidents and preplanned events;
- Maintain a response operation capable of expanding to meet an escalating situation and the ability to integrate resources and equipment from intrastate and interstate mutual aid agreements, state-provided assistance, and federal government response;
- Order and track response assets using common resource typing and definitions, and draw on mutual aid agreements for additional assistance;
- Establish staging and allocation plans for the re-distribution of equipment, supplies, and aid coming into the area from other localities, states, or the federal government through mutual aid agreements;
- Conduct situational assessments and establish the appropriate ICS organizational structure to effectively manage the incident; and
- Establish communication processes, procedures and protocols that will ensure effective interoperable communications among emergency responders, 9-1-1 centers, and multi-agency coordination systems (Emergency Operations Centers).

In federal Fiscal Year 2005, the Secretary of Homeland Security provided guidance to each state, outlining initial actions that should be taken to implement the NIMS. The letter to the nation's governors included a list of recommended actions for tribal and local governments to help them work towards NIMS compliance. A copy of this letter is posted on the NIMS webpage at: http://www.fema.gov/nims/nims_compliance.shtm. Recommended FY 2005 NIMS activities included:

- Institutionalize the use of the Incident Command System;
- Complete the NIMS awareness course IS-700 NIMS: An Introduction;
- Formally recognize NIMS and adopt NIMS principles and policies;
- Establish a NIMS compliance baseline by determining the NIMS requirements that have already been met; and
- Develop a strategy and timeline for full NIMS implementation.

By completing these activities, communities will have made substantial progress toward full NIMS implementation by the start of Fiscal Year 2007 (i.e. October 1, 2006). In federal Fiscal Year 2006, tribes and local communities will be required to complete several activities to comply with the NIMS. The attached implementation matrix describes the actions that jurisdictions must take by September 30, 2006 to be compliant with NIMS.

Completion of these actions will position tribal and local communities to better manage prevention, response and recovery efforts. The matrix identifies activities that are underway by the NIMS Integration Center (NIC) to support the effective implementation of NIMS as well as activities that will be required for NIMS implementation in future years.