Appendix D

National Incident Management System (NIMS)
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A. History

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is a structured framework used nationwide for both governmental and non-governmental agencies to respond to natural disasters and or terrorist attacks at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

A 2003 Homeland Security Presidential Directive required all federal agencies to adopt the NIMS and to use it in their individual domestic incident management and emergency prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation programs and activities. The directive also required federal departments to make adoption of NIMS by state, tribal, and local organizations a condition for federal preparedness assistance beginning in 2005. NIMS is based on an appropriate balance of flexibility and standardization.

B. Flexibility

NIMS 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.

C. Standardization

NIMS provides a set of standard organizational structures, as well as requirements for processes, procedures and systems designed to improve operability among jurisdictions and disciplines in various areas.

D. Command and management

NIMS standard incident command structures are based on three key organizational systems:

- The Incident Command System
- Multi-agency Coordination (MAC) System
- Public Information Systems

E. Preparedness

Preparedness involves efforts at all levels of government and between government and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to identify threats, determine vulnerabilities, and identify required resources. Within the NIMS, preparedness is operationally focused on establishing guidelines, protocols, and standards for planning, training and exercises, personnel qualification and certification, equipment certification, and publication management.
F. Resource management

Efficient incident management requires a system for identifying available resources at all jurisdictional levels to enable timely and unimpeded access to resources needed to prepare for, respond to, or recover from an incident. Resource management under the NIMS includes mutual-aid agreements; the use of special Federal, State, local, and tribal teams; and resource mobilization protocols.

G. Communications and Information Management

NIMS requires incident management organizations to ensure that effective interoperable communications and information management processes, procedures and systems exist to support a wide variety of incident management activities across agencies and jurisdictions.

H. NIMS and California’s Office of Emergency Services

California’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) is designated as the principal coordinator for NIMS implementation statewide. Annually, Cal OES administers the process to communicate, monitor and implement NIMS requirements in cooperation with affected state agencies and departments, local governments and other critical stakeholders. Cal OES utilizes the National Incident Management System Compliance Assistance Support Tool (NIMSCAST) for measuring progress and facilitating reporting.

San Diego State University has adopted NIMS.