



The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is a comprehensive system that improves tribal and local emergency response operations through the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) and the application of standardized emergency procedures and preparedness measures.¹ It provides a consistent approach and a “common language” for federal, state, and local governments to work effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic disaster incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

HELPFUL HINTS

FOR SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

THE NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) AND SCHOOLS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND FY 2006 NIMS COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS

Q: Why is NIMS important for schools?

A: 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 state and local jurisdictions to implement the NIMS to receive federal preparedness funding. As defined in the *Homeland Security Act of 2002*, Section 2(10): the term “local government” includes “(A) county, municipality, city, town, township, local public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, ...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)²

Grantees of the Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) grant administered by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools are included in this requirement.

Q: What do FY 2005 ERCM grantees need to do to support the implementation of NIMS?³

A: Local education agencies (LEAs) that received funding under the FY 2005 ERCM grant competition agreed to support the implementation of NIMS. Specifically, by September 2006 they must: 1) administer the NIMS



¹ The NIMS Integration Center, “NIMS Implementation Matrix for Tribal and Local Jurisdictions.” 2006. DHS/FEMA, p.1.

² Ibid.

³ FY 2003 and FY 2004 ERCM grantees are not required to support NIMS as a requisite for successful completion of their grants.



Awareness Course: “National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction” (IS 700) to key district and school staff; 2) formally recognize the NIMS and adopt NIMS principles and policies; 3) establish a NIMS baseline to determine which NIMS requirements have been met by the LEA; 4) establish a time frame and strategy for full implementation of the NIMS requirements identified by the Department of Homeland Security; and, 5) establish the use of the Incident Command System (ICS).

Q: What are FY 2006 ERCM grantees required to do to support the implementation of NIMS?

A: The Department of Homeland Security has released the NIMS compliance activities for

FY 2006. Schools and school districts that received funding under the FY 2006 ERCM grant competition agreed to support NIMS through ensuring they have met all of the FY 2006 NIMS compliance requirements by the end of the ERCM grant period. The attached “Checklist of FY 2006 NIMS Compliance Activities for Schools” outlines the requirements in detail.

Q: Do schools that have not received emergency preparedness funding need to support NIMS?

A: Though schools that have not received emergency preparedness funding are not required to adopt NIMS, the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools recommends that LEAs work closely with their local community partners to assess their progress toward NIMS implementation. As LEAs are not traditional response organizations, first responder services will typically be provided to LEAs by local fire and rescue departments, emergency medical service providers, and law enforcement agencies. Since local governments and first responders are required to adopt NIMS, it is beneficial for LEAs to also be familiar with NIMS so that in an emergency LEAs and local first responders will be using common language and operating under similar structures.



The Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) Technical Assistance (TA) Center was established in October 2004 by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS). The center supports schools and school districts in developing and implementing comprehensive emergency and crisis response plans by providing technical assistance via trainings, publications and individualized responses to requests. *Helpful Hints* provides a quick overview of school emergency preparedness topics that are frequently the subject of inquiries. For additional information about the National Incident Management System or any other emergency management-related topic, please visit the ERCM TA Center at www.ercm.org or call 1-888-991-3726.

For information about the Emergency Response and Crisis Management grant program, contact Tara Hill (tara.hill@ed.gov), Michelle Sinkgraven (michelle.sinkgraven@ed.gov), or Sara Strizzi (sara.strizzi@ed.gov).

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CHECKLIST OF FY 2006 NIMS COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS

DESCRIPTION OF NIMS ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ⁴	COMPLETE?
Adopt NIMS at the community level	School district administration or school board in partnership with local government	Example community templates: http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/nims_toolsandtemplates.shtm .	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>
Institutionalize Incident Command System (ICS)	School district crisis team and individual school crisis teams	Institutionalize ICS: Terms and definitions available at http://www.fema.gov/txt/nims/institutionalizing_ics.txt .	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>
Formalize a public information system and a joint information system	School district public information officer (PIO) and PIOs from partner agencies	Optional PIO training offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): Public Information Training (E388, Advanced Public Information Officers and G290, Basic Public Information Officers). Information available at http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/EMICourses/EMICourse.asp .	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>
Update emergency plan to incorporate NIMS	School district crisis team and individual school crisis teams		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>
Establish NIMS baseline and current progress	School district administration		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>
Complete IS-700 NIMS: An Introduction and IS-800 NRP: An Introduction	Key personnel ⁵	These independent study courses are available online at http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp and http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is800.asp .	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>
Complete ICS-200 and ICS-100	Key personnel	These courses are available online at http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is100.asp and http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is200.asp .	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>
Utilize ICS and NIMS terminology during all tabletops, exercises, drills, and actual emergencies	Key personnel and all community partners and first responders		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>
Incorporate corrective actions and lessons learned into updated emergency plan	School district crisis team and individual school crisis teams	For additional information on conducting exercises, please visit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Department of Homeland Security, Office of Domestic Preparedness: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/exercises.htm. 2) ERCMExpress "Emergency Exercises: An Effective Way to Validate School Safety Plans" Newsletter at: http://www.ercm.org. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/>

⁴ All hyperlinks and URLs included in this publication were accessed on July 24, 2006.

⁵ "Key personnel" include all school district and school employees who have a direct role in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response. This will be different for each LEA. For example, it may include your school district crisis team as well as select members of each individual school-building crisis team.