

A
National Incident Management System Consortium
White Paper

NIMSC

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The Application of the National Incident Management System
In Law Enforcement Operations

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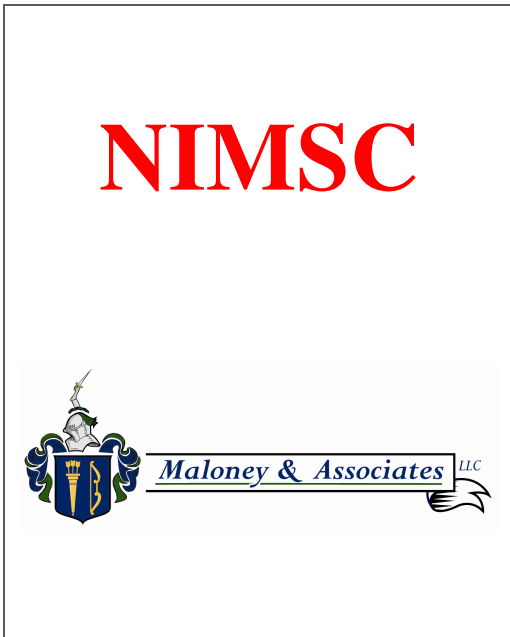
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the establishment of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) by Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPD), law enforcement agencies across the nation have diligently made efforts to comply with the spirit, intention and letter of the Directives. Efforts to develop congruence with NIMS include the incorporation of the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS) into basic police academy curriculum, integration into daily activities and special operations across the nation.

With the approach of the half-decade mark since the issuance of HSPD #5, the need for effective application of NIMS nationwide continues, yet no measure of the progress of implementation has been accomplished to date. The process known as Appreciative Inquiry, a systemic approach to ground the success of future behaviors through the chronicling of existing achievements, could be applied through a cross-disciplinary collaboration. This process would recognize the effectiveness of the actual practices that have grown throughout the past five years to produce job-aid style playbooks for law enforcement for the workforce of the future. An authoritative sourcebook for use nationwide in law enforcement basic academies could also result from this process.

For ICS to be effective on major incidents, it must become incorporated into everyday operations of all responders.

National Incident Management Consortium

INTRODUCTION

In March of 2004, HSPD #5 established the method for managing domestic incidents nationwide as NIMS. Since the issuance of HSPD #5, law enforcement agencies across the nation have diligently made efforts to comply with the spirit and intent of the Directive. As with all of the first responder disciplines that are encapsulated by the requirements of NIMS, law enforcement agencies across the nation set out to incorporate the principles of the directive to both the existing and future workforces. The law enforcement profession has recognized the concurrent need to bring existing staff to a level of proficiency with NIMS and ICS, just as it has had an equal need to develop a level of proficiency in those incident command skills to law enforcement recruits in basic academy settings. With law enforcement standards set within each state, various paths have developed to establish best practices in NIMS, ICS and unified command.

Similar endeavors evolved in the fire service and one outgrowth of the development was the National Incident Management System Consortium (NIMSC).¹ NIMSC was established as a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation in the State of Texas 17-years ago with the intention of merging the two most popular incident command systems into a single command system. Through the dedicated collaborative efforts of twenty-three (23) major organizations, the merger was achieved in the fire service through a consensus process. NIMSC has proven expertise in the process of document development along similar lines for NIMS and ICS in the nation's emergency services. Adapting this proven document development process to the discipline of law enforcement provides a significant opportunity for cross-disciplinary collaboration.

¹ See <http://ims-consortium.com/> for additional information concerning NIMSC

This opportunity for inquiry, research and document development of this cross-disciplinary nature calls for an appropriate model of inquiry and research as integral components of such a collaboration. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is both a research methodology and a process of facilitating positive change in human systems.² AI is a process that includes in its focus identification of what has been done well and correctly as a springboard upon which future actions and behaviors may be grounded. AI is, by its very nature, a collaborative process of inquiry that can serve to encourage creativity on an individual level and innovation on a group level. As a collaborative process, AI is an ideal research methodology to bring together successful procedures that may assist in establishing models of best practices such as with the variety of activities that constitute frequent and infrequent law enforcement activities.

The AI process is very congruent with the developmental nature of the work NIMSC has accomplished in the fire service. Combining the developmental process of AI with the collaborative history of NIMSC would be an effective methodology and process for law enforcement subject matter experts to research and document the incorporation of NIMS / ICS in daily and special operations of law enforcement. Such a process could produce job-aid style playbooks for law enforcement and an authoritative sourcebook for use nationwide in law enforcement basic academies.

What follows is a proposal for that collaborative effort wherein national law enforcement organizations may join with the NIMSC to develop playbooks, field operations guides and/or academic resource publications suitable to support basic academy instruction for law enforcement operations utilizing ICS principals. NIMSC welcomes membership from all first responder disciplines who strive to implement ICS into their organizations.

² See <http://centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/> for additional information about Appreciative Inquiry

BACKGROUND

Since 9/11, the Federal Government has implemented a series of policies and legislated regulations to address the issue of Homeland Security. One salient point in these directives has been the need for collaboration between the multi-disciplinary agencies that comprise Homeland Security efforts nationwide. In March of 2004, HSPD #5 established the method for managing incidents nationwide as the NIMS. NIMS compliance is required by all levels of government in order to improve efficiency of multi-disciplinary emergency operations. NIMS compliance is a requirement to qualify for Federal Homeland Security grant funding.

The objective of the United States Government is to ensure that all levels of government across the Nation have the capability to work efficiently and effectively together, using a national approach to domestic incident management.

*Homeland Security
Presidential Directive-5*

NIMSC is a not-for-profit group of dedicated professionals focused on the philosophy of ICS as the foundation of the multi-disciplinary, multi-agency response to major incidents. NIMSC also recognizes that ICS procedural guidelines developed specifically for the fire services are not necessarily applicable to other disciplines. NIMSC desires to develop discipline specific ICS model response-plan guidelines for law enforcement with the intent of improving joint operations and in agencies achieving authentic NIMS compliance nationwide.

NIMSC has developed ICS model guidelines compliant with NIMS for the fire service nationally. NIMSC background and experience in that document developmental process spans years and includes provisions for the revision of existing guidelines continuing on a 5-year cycle. NIMSC is committed to the development of new model response-plan guidelines with all core first responder disciplines. NIMSC has historically been an organization of fire service professionals whose goals included merging the two

most popular incident command systems used by the American fire service into a single common system. The merger, achieved through a consensus process, represents the American fire service. The implementation of NIMS has achieved the goal of one incident management system for the nation. We anticipate that a similar consensus process is expandable to embrace members of the response discipline of law enforcement for the betterment of all.

The Major City Chiefs Association (MCC) is a professional law enforcement organization of police executives representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada. The MCC provides a unique forum for urban police, sheriffs and other law enforcement chief executives to discuss common problems, to share information and problem-solving strategies. Membership is designed to reflect the public safety needs and unique crime problems of the largest policing agencies in the United States and Canada. Current membership of the MCC now includes fifty-six (56) members from the United States and seven (7) from Canadian provinces.³ The vision of this project appears well aligned with the historical purpose of the MCC.

The concepts espoused in this white paper has been embraced and supported by the California Company, Maloney & Associates, LLC. The company, founded in 2007, by a retired law enforcement professional is shaped by the groundwork of the founder's underlying three decades of public service in the in the greater San Francisco, California, Bay Area. The company addresses a wide variety of educational, management, leadership and security services, including providing subject matter expertise in the review of a wide variety of courses funded by the federal Department of Homeland Security. The areas of expertise of those courses include homeland security, tactical operations, emergency management, criminal intelligence, distance learning certification programs and instructor development.

³ See <http://www.majorcitieschiefs.org/about.shtml> for additional information about the Major Cities Chiefs Association

Funding opportunities to support such an endeavor such as that described in this document are critical to the success of the project, yet are largely uncommon due to the cross-disciplinary nature of the project. The NIMSC document development process does not provide for funds to compensate participating collaborators nor staff who accomplish the supporting tasks; there will be a need to secure funds to reimburse travel expenses for those participating in this project. Such funding may be elicited from governmental or non-governmental sources that have yet to be identified. The scope of the project is anticipated to require funding comfortably less than a million dollars and funding would be needed primarily for travel, meetings, and publication costs to support the creation of the deliverables identified herein as benefits.

The following national law enforcement groups have been identified as organizations that are appropriate for collaboration to form the core workgroups of the project to recognize the application of the principles and relevant concepts of ICS to routine law enforcement incidents (groups presented alphabetically):

- Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) www.fop.net
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) www.theiacp.org
- Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCC) www.majorcitieschiefs.org
- Major County Sheriffs' Association (MCS) www.mcsheriffs.com
- National Narcotics Officers' Associations' Coalition (NNOAC)
www.natlnarc.org
- National Native American Law Enforcement Association (NNALEA)
<http://www.nnalea.org/>
- National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) www.sheriffs.org

Formal invitations have been extended by NIMSC to the above organizations, to become involved in discussion of how best to identify the parameters of the scope of the project. There will be a need for subject matter experts to meet in working groups to identify existing practices. There will be logistical, administrative, editing, and funding support also needed.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The National Response Framework (NRF) is a guide to how the Nation conducts all-hazards response. The NRF incorporates the principals of ICS and describes within its doctrine the achievement of unity of effort through unified command. NIMSC believes and asserts that response to large-scale incidents requires all disciplines to understand each other's roles and capabilities and then leverage the fundamentals of ICS and teamwork to maximize effectiveness. This project offers a process where subject matter experts from key response disciplines collaborate to build the first generation of documentation of ICS applications to law enforcement incidents.

The process itself, which constitutes chronicling the application of NIMS in law enforcement operations, would entail the a formal collaborative effort between leading law enforcement national organizations, as a source of discipline specific subject matter experts, and NIMSC in the development of appropriate documentation of ICS application in routine law enforcement incidents. Those incidents could range from requests for reports, checking reported suspicious circumstances or individuals to various law enforcement calls for service. The foundation of establishing model response-plan guidelines would involve a synthesis of understanding how law enforcement organizations currently use the principals of ICS in both everyday and special operations that result in meeting the intention and requirements of NIMS.

Effective response hinges upon well trained leaders and responders who have invested in response preparedness, developed engaged partnerships, and are able to achieve shared objectives. The players' bench is constantly changing, but a concise, common playbook is needed by all.

*National Response Framework,
January 2008*

The process would be embedded in a planned series of meetings dispersed periodically throughout a designated course of time. The scope of the project is

anticipated to consume less than eighteen months from funding. A Steering Committee would identify, define and outline the various component tasks, along with the associated time lines, keeping the project focused and moving forward. Separate workgroups would tend to the individual data collection tasks and the core of the specific gathering of information to constitute the crux of subsequent publications. These publications would embody the series of deliverable benefits able to emerge from these focused collaborative efforts. Subsequently, the anticipated benefits would follow a developmental progression culminating in a range of separate publications. These would be the project deliverables of the multi-disciplinary collaborative effort. The deliverables will provide benefit for the national law enforcement community and by extension of effectiveness, the public.

The subsequent publications will include a strong integration of general objectives, and strategies, congruent with the early implementation of ICS in virtually any incident to ensure the smooth escalation of the command organization to meet the needs of small, medium and large-scale incidents. The process of development will result in publications to illustrate the application of NIMS and ICS in law enforcement operations. Each of the law enforcement national organizations invited to collaborate on the project are recognized as leaders in their field and serve as the most appropriate partners to engage in this type of shared mission with clear benefits to the first responder community and public, nationwide.

BENEFITS

The benefits of a coordinated appreciative inquiry and review of existing law enforcement practices would focus on the benefits created through three documents as follows:

BENEFIT 1 - JOB AID

This is an instrument designed to assist law enforcement emergency response personnel in the use of the NIMS ICS during incident operations. A job aid would be in the form of a compact handy reference, an easy to carry resource guidebook that is a durably constructed document intended for use in by line staff, supervisors and managers in response to specified incidents or events. Such a job aid would list specific job and/or task descriptions that have proven valuable in past response operations for specified incidents or events. It may contain critically prioritized data needed during the evolving moments of a given event by responding personnel; including, incident objectives, incident organizational charts, notification priorities, etc. It is not a policy document and does not replace Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs), laws, regulations, and ordinances. Rather, such a document provides guidance for assigned incident/event personnel in both preplanning and during the course of an actual incident or event. A tool such as a job aid can serve to provide a valuable resource and service to the existing staff now providing law enforcement operations along the personnel continuum from line staff, through supervisors, management to the executive level. The effective composition of the job aid would be sculpted to encompass the basic principles of NIMS/ICS, the specifics of potential applications of NIMS/ICS components for a wide variety of basic, everyday law enforcement operations as described in Part I or Part II of the Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook⁴. In addition, several uncommon yet significant operations that are encountered in law enforcement, such as evacuations, clandestine laboratories, mass casualty incidents, and, search and rescue operations could be included in such a field operations guide.

⁴ See <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm> for details and frequently asked questions about Uniform Crime Reporting.

BENEFIT 2 - NATIONAL PLANNING SCENARIOS⁵

A multi-discipline collaborative effort for developing model incident objectives and organizational charts (i.e.: playbooks) with specific references to the National Planning Scenarios. The initial effort would involve four of the scenarios where a different discipline is likely to be the lead agency. Every discipline may/will have significant resources and capabilities to contribute to each of the four scenarios; however, the authority having jurisdiction according to their expertise would determine the lead agency. Following are the proposed scenarios with the proposed lead discipline:

1. **Scenario 3 Pandemic Influenza**—Public Health
2. **Scenario 8 Chlorine Attack**—Fire/Hazardous Materials
3. **Scenario 10 Hurricane**—Emergency Management
4. **Scenario 12 Improvised Explosive Device**—Law Enforcement

Each group would take the same fictional city's resources, apply their scenario, and build model objectives and ICS structures to match. During a general session, all four groups will collaborate in building the final product, which will provide model ICS applications for the four complex scenarios. The Consortium members will guide the process insuring ICS principals are followed. The four groups will be bringing to the table their knowledge and experience for their specific discipline. The application of ICS principals should provide a synergistic multidisciplinary model playbook that could be referenced during exercises and actual events.

BENEFIT 3 - ACADEMY RESOURCE PUBLICATION

In basic law enforcement academies stretching across the nation the principles of NIMS have been incorporated in the curriculum based upon HSPD 5, which was not

⁵ See http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1189720458491.shtm for details of the DHS press release concerning the National Preparedness Guidelines, including the National Planning Scenarios.

composed as an academic document. Composing an academically based textbook provides the opportunity to address, uniformly, the proficiency of law enforcement recruits in basic academy settings across the nation. The influx of those progressing into the profession of law enforcement represents the ongoing growth of the workforce, which could benefit most from well-grounded and uniform knowledge with which to work efficiently and effectively in situations requiring unified command. Such a publication is not a policy document and does not replace Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs), laws, regulations, and ordinances; it would serve to be complimentary to them.

A textbook of this sort would provide detailed guidance and synthesis of the content of HSPD 5 for assigned incident/event personnel in classroom setting for preplanning the potential course of an actual incidents or events. A tool such as a detailed resource publication can serve to provide a valuable resource and service to staff who will be providing law enforcement operations along the future personnel continuum from line staff, through supervisors, management and ultimately to the executive level. The effective composition of a basic academy resource publication would be sculpted to encompass the basic principles of NIMS/ICS in detail; it would detail the specifics of potential applications of NIMS/ICS components for a wide variety of basic, everyday law enforcement operations and particularize special, uncommon yet significant operations that are encountered in law enforcement.

IMPLEMENTATION

Once funded the process of implementation would be coordinated by NIMSC. A steering committee charged with shared responsibility to create the details of the final time line for the project would be formed. The steering committee would create a framework for determining the scope of each component part of the project. The steering committee would also identify the need for the creation of working groups, sufficient in number of subject matter experts to represent the presence of national law enforcement organizations both large and small.

These smaller working groups would periodically meet to discuss the details of current law enforcement operations for the various deliverables to develop and take shape. For instance, the job aid would likely be limited in scope and depth, containing the only a condensed version of the most critical components that would be found in far greater detail in the textbook suitable for use in law enforcement academies nationwide. Funding sufficient to encompass administrative costs and all deliverables would decrease any need to replicate meetings in the future for the same purpose.

NIMSC has successfully used this steering committee and working group process to publish two books published by Fire Protection Publications at Oklahoma State University⁶. A third publication from NIMSC for Highway Incidents applied the organizational principles of ICS to generic highway incidents in collaboration with the Department of Transportation. This law enforcement project would use the principles of Appreciative Inquiry of research to identify what is currently being accomplished by law enforcement in congruence with the organizational principles of NIMS/ICS, across the nation. This research process is best suited to identify any existing gaps, bridging them with effective principles currently in use; best practices. Those effective best practices will then be memorialized into the appropriate deliverable product. The job aid will serve as a resource to members of the current workforce who have been on the cutting

⁶ See <http://www.ims-consortium.org/> for details of both publications.

edge of integrating NIMSC into law enforcement operations. The academy resource publication will serve as a nationwide platform of best practices detailing the integration of NIMS for the workforce of tomorrow, with an educational overtone. Finally, the application of NIMS/ICS to the National Planning Scenarios will serve as a logical extension to meet National Preparedness as described by HSPD 8.

Original funding sought would include production of a sufficient number of the respective publications to have widespread distribution among the collaborating contributor organizations. The implementation would include mechanisms for future publication and distribution of the materials.

CONCLUSION

NIMSC has proposed a cross-disciplinary, collaborative process with national law enforcement groups to develop model response-plan guidelines for law enforcement that incorporate the principals of ICS as used in law enforcement field operations. The collaboration would use the successful process of NIMSC for document development.

Experience has shown that the best method to achieve NIMS compliance requires integration of ICS into day—to—day operations. The need to merge discipline-specific operational guidelines with ICS principals, as described in Appendix A, is foundational to achieving the intent of an effective incident command system across the nation. The NIMSC has demonstrated both institutional knowledge of ICS and a proficient capability in developing model guidelines of this sort, yet it is aware of a lack of internal technical knowledge to address details of law enforcement operations. NIMSC recognizes that national law enforcement organizations is best poised to share their operational expertise so that it can be married with the NIMSC's expertise in developing relevant ICS response-plan guidelines and documents.

In early March 2009, the MCC sent a letter of support to NIMSC to encourage development of this evolving project. MCC recognized the benefit of a process of AI that recognizes the principles of ICS in law enforcement field operations.

Upon securing an appropriate level of funding to support the project, the foundational partnership will be poised to engage in the development process. NIMSC hopes to expand the network of support for the project to include a wide, national representation of law enforcement professionals in the workgroups who will provide the raw data to be assembled into the project deliverables.

APPENDIX

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FOURTEEN PRINCIPLES OF ICS

1. **COMMON TERMINOLOGY:** Using common terminology helps to define organizational functions, incident facilities, resource descriptions, and position titles.
2. **MODULAR ORGANIZATION:** The Incident Command organizational structure develops in a top-down, modular fashion based on the size and complexity of the incident, as well as the specifics of the hazard environment created by the incident.
3. **MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES:** Includes establishing overarching objectives; developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols; establishing specific, measurable objectives for various incident management functional activities; and directing efforts to attain the established objectives.
4. **RELIANCE ON AN INCIDENT ACTION PLAN:** Incident Action Plans (IAPs) provide a coherent means of communicating the overall incident objectives in the contexts of both operational and support activities.
5. **CHAIN OF COMMAND AND UNITY OF COMMAND:** Chain of command refers to the orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization. Unity of command means that every individual has a designated supervisor to whom he or she reports at the scene of the incident. These principles clarify reporting relationships and eliminate the confusion caused by multiple, conflicting directives. Incident managers at all levels must be able to control the actions of all personnel under their supervision.
6. **UNIFIED COMMAND:** In incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, a single jurisdiction with multi-agency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multi-agency involvement, Unified Command allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.
7. **MANAGEABLE SPAN OF CONTROL:** Span of control is crucial to effective and efficient incident management. Within ICS, the span of control of any individual with incident management supervisory responsibility should range from three to seven subordinates.
8. **PRE-DESIGNATED INCIDENT LOCATIONS AND FACILITIES:** Establish various types of operational locations and support facilities near an incident to accomplish a variety of purposes. Typical pre-designated facilities include Incident Command Posts, Bases, Camps, Staging Areas, Mass Casualty Triage Areas, and others as required.

9. **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:** Resource management includes processes for categorizing, ordering, dispatching, tracking, and recovering resources. It also includes processes for reimbursement of resources, as appropriate. Resources are defined as personnel, teams, equipment, supplies, and facilities available or potentially available for assignment or allocation in support of incident management and emergency response activities.
10. **INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE MANAGEMENT:** The incident management organization must establish a process for gathering, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.
11. **INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS:** Facilitate incident communications through the development and use of a common communications plan and interoperable communications processes and architectures.
12. **TRANSFER OF COMMAND:** Clearly establish the command function from the beginning of an incident. When command is transferred, the process must include a briefing that captures all essential information for continuing safe and effective operations.
13. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Effective accountability at all jurisdictional levels and within individual functional areas during incident operations is essential. To that end, the following principles must be adhered to:
 - **Check-In:** All responders, regardless of agency affiliation, must report in to receive an assignment in accordance with the procedures established by the Incident Commander.
 - **Incident Action Plan:** Response operations must be directed and coordinated as outlined in the IAP.
 - **Unity of Command:** Assign each individual involved in incident operations to only one supervisor.
 - **Span of Control:** Supervisors must be able to adequately supervise and control their subordinates, as well as communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision.
 - **Resource Tracking:** Supervisors must record and report resource status changes as they occur.
14. **DEPLOYMENT:** Personnel and equipment should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority.