

## Text of Secretary Ridge's Letter to National Response Plan (NRP) Federal Departments and Agencies Regarding NIMS Implementation in FY 2005

In Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5, *Management of Domestic Incidents*, the President directed me to develop and administer the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The NIMS provides a consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State<sup>1</sup>, territorial, tribal, and local<sup>2</sup> governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity. On March 1, 2004, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued the NIMS to provide a comprehensive national approach to incident management, applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. HSPD-5 also required DHS to establish a mechanism for ongoing coordination to provide strategic direction for, and oversight of, the NIMS. To this end, the NIMS Integration Center (NIC) was established to support both routine maintenance and the continuous refinement of the NIMS.

All Federal departments and agencies are required to adopt the NIMS and use it in their individual domestic incident management and emergency prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities, as well as in support of all actions taken to assist State or local entities. As a primary or support agency for the National Response Plan (NRP), it is critical that your department or agency implement the NIMS.

Implementation of and compliance with the NIMS is critical to ensuring full and robust preparedness across our nation. In accordance with HSPD-5, this memorandum outlines important first steps that we expect your departments and agencies to take in order to successfully implement the NIMS.

- **Identify existing or anticipated FY 2005 Federal preparedness assistance programs**

HSPD-5 established ambitious deadlines for NIMS adoption and implementation, including the requirement that, beginning in Fiscal Year 2005, Federal departments and agencies shall make adoption of the NIMS a requirement, to the extent permitted by law, for providing Federal preparedness assistance through grants, contracts, or other activities. FY 2005 is a start up year for NIMS implementation and full compliance with the NIMS is not required for grantees to receive FY 2005 grant funds. Since FY 2005 is a critical year for NIMS adoption and your grantees must be encouraged to direct their FY 2005 preparedness assistance to implementing the NIMS (in accordance with the eligibility and allowable uses of the grants).

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<sup>1</sup> 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)

<sup>2</sup> 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)

By September 13, 2004, please identify any existing or anticipated programs that provide preparedness assistance (*grants or contracts that contribute to building preparedness and response capabilities*) to States and local entities along with a point of contact and contact information for each program. The NIC will work with all Federal preparedness assistance programs to ensure that the FY 2005 program documents contain language that addresses State and local NIMS implementation. The NIC will provide you with general NIMS adoption language for your use in program documents.

- **Submit a plan for adopting and implementing the NIMS**

By December 31, 2004, the head of each Federal department and agency shall submit to me and the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security a plan to adopt and implement the NIMS. The Assistant to the President for Homeland Security will review the plans and advise the President on whether such plans effectively implement the NIMS. Federal department and agency plans must reflect full adoption and implementation of the NIMS by September 30, 2005. The NIC will provide you with a template for your NIMS Implementation Plan by September 30, 2004

- **Incorporate the NIMS into Emergency Operations Plans**

All department and agencies should immediately begin to incorporate the NIMS framework (including the concepts, principles, and terminology) into your existing Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), or other similar plans.

To assist us in coordinating NIMS implementation among our Federal partners, please identify a point of contact for NIMS implementation within your Department or Agency. You should submit your NIMS implementation point of contact, a list of your Federal Preparedness Assistance programs, and your NIMS Implementation Plan to the NIC.

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Additional information about NIMS compliance and resources for achieving compliance will be forthcoming from the NIC. The NIMS document and information and tools for implementation are available on the NIC web page ([www.fema.gov/nims](http://www.fema.gov/nims)). In addition, a NIMS Awareness Course: "National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction" (IS 700) is available on-line to provide more information about the NIMS. This independent study course, developed by the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), explains the purpose, principles, key components and benefits of NIMS. The course is available on-line and takes between forty-five minutes to three hours to complete. The course is available on the EMI web page at: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>.

I ask for your continued assistance as we implement the NIMS. I look forward to continuing our collective efforts to better secure the homeland and protect our citizens and appreciate all of your hard work in this important endeavor.

Signed: Secretary of Homeland Security Ridge