# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*I do not understand what NIMS is.  Could you explain to me what benefit our small fire department will gain from using NIMS?*

**Answer:**  The National Incident Management System (NIMS) was developed to provide a system that would help emergency mangers and responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines work together more effectively to handle emergencies and disasters.   Most incidents are handled on a daily basis by a single, local jurisdiction at the local level, often by fire personnel, EMS and law enforcement.  But even for incidents that are relatively limited in scope, coordination and cooperation among the responding organizations makes for a more effective response.

When the NIMS is adopted and used nationwide it will form a standardized, unified framework for incident management within which government and private entities at all levels can work together effectively.  The NIMS provides a set of standardized organizational structures such as the Incident Command System and standardized processes, procedures and systems.  These processes and procedures are designed to improve interoperability among jurisdictions and disciplines in various areas - command and management, resource management, training and communications.

*What is the base line for NIMS compliance for the State of Nebraska?*

**Answer:**  On 4 April 2005, the Homeland Security Director and the Homeland Security Policy Group identified that the EMI IS-100 (Incident Command System) and the EMI IS-700 (National Incident Management System) will be the base line compliant documents for NIMS compliancy within the State of Nebraska.  It is understood that there may be courses added to this base line requirement in the future.

*What is the NIMS Implementation Plan and who is responsible to have one?*

**Answer:**  The NIMS Implementation Plan is the tool by which any entity can track and monitor their progress toward being NIMS compliant.  This tool also allows for each entity to identify specific training that is required for individual entity needs.  All entities applying for grant dollars that are

allocated under the Homeland Security Grant umbrella are required to complete a NIMS Implementation Plan.

*Where can we find a copy of the NIMS Implementation Plan?*

**Answer:** A copy and an example of the NIMS Implementation Plan may be found on the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's web site located at http://www.nebema.org/

*Who has to be NIMS compliant?*

**Answer:** Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPD) 5 and 8 provide some guidance but not specific guidance at this time. We are comfortable indicating that "responders" will be required to be NIMS compliant. HSPD 8 indicates "the term 'first responder" refers to those individuals who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment, including emergency response providers such as defined in section 2 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101), as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works, and other skilled support personnel (such as equipment operators) that provide immediate support services during prevention, response, and recovery operations." Presently being added to this list are political (elected and appointed) officials. Additional information on this will be provided in the future.

*In the NIMS Implementation Plan posted on your web page, the term "employees" is used in reference to staff training. Should unpaid volunteers and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) members be included in the projected training?*

**Answer:** We strongly recommend that volunteers and CERT members use the NIMS Implementation Plan and complete the IS 100 and IS 700. They are part of the emergency response community.

*Our Fire Department currently has SOPs in place for incident command. All 43 volunteer members of our Fire Department have completed the IS 100 and IS 700 and the NFA ICS course. However, we utilize vocabulary differently in our policies (Fire Command – Sectors, etc.) rather than specific terminology that is described in NIMS. In order to meet*

*compliance, does it matter which ICS that is used (NIMS, Firescope, Fire Command (Brunnacini), etc.)?*

**Answer:** The NIMS is based on NIIMs ICS, Firescope and NWCG ICS, which are their NIMS compliant, for now. However, all ICS curriculums are currently being revised to more accurately reflect the NIMS, including Firescope, NWCG and ICS as taught by the National Fire Academy. <u>Fire Ground is not NIMS compliant.</u> You will need to ensure compliancy of your plans, policies and procedures and those should reflect the terminology and vocabulary identified in the NIMS.

*I took the final exam a few days ago and still have not heard from EMI as to the status of my test. How do I check on that?*

**Answer:** Because of the thousands of people completing the independent study courses each week, it may take as long as six weeks to process exam results and get completions certificates mailed. The Emergency Management Institute appreciates your patience and will email a notice of completion if you include your email address on your exam submissions. Completion notices will be issued within twenty-four hours for exams submitted Monday through Friday. Notices for all weekend submissions will be emailed by the following Monday afternoon. You will need to retain the email notice as proof of your course completion until you receive your IS Study Program Certificate of Achievement in the mail.

*Who needs to receive a copy of my IS Study Program Certificate of Achievement for the completion of IS 100 and IS 700?*

**Answer:** You will need to provide a copy to your immediate supervisor or as identified in your agency/jurisdiction operational directives. The State of Nebraska does not keep an all inclusive copy of Independent Study Certificates.

*What constitutes "full NIMS implementation" or "full NIMS compliance" in FY2007, starting 10/01/06? The phrase is being used in NIMS documents but we can't find a specific description of what it means. Is it just completion of the activities begun in FY2005, or is it something more than that?*

**Answer:** Specific NIMS requirement for "full NIMS compliance" to be completed during FY2006 have not yet been released. Everything this is required for FY2005 compliance activities is outlined on the NIMS page on the FEMA.GOV Web site, in a summary document that is derived from the Secretary's letter to the governors, and the letter itself.
http://www.fema.gov/nims

*What does it take to become qualified to instruct the IS 100 and IS 700 courses?*

**Answer:** If your agency/jurisdiction has approved you to instruct for them and you have taken and passed the IS 100 and the IS 700 may download the materials from the IS 100 and IS 700 page or download the NIMS Workshop PowerPoint from the NEMA web site and facilitate the course. For more information about NIMS and NIMS training see www.fema.gov/nims .

*What is the NIMSCAST?*

**Answer:** NIMSCAST stands for National Incident Management System Capability Assessment Support Tool. The NIMSCAST is a web-based self-assessment tool designed to aid state, local and tribal organizations and jurisdictions in determining their capabilities and compliance against the requirements established in the recently released National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The NIMSCAST is designed for incident and resource managers as a comprehensive self=assessment support tool. It helps users assess the current level of their jurisdiction or organization's incident preparedness against the requirement outlined in the NIMS. Using the NIMSCAST to identify weaknesses in incident preparedness will help incident and resource managers become compliant with NIMS by FY 2006, as required by the NIMS.

The State of Nebraska is presently not prepared to receive this information and will provide additional direction for submittal of this information when it becomes available.

*Do you have any guidance on NIMS compliance in the EOC?*

**Answer**: NIMS characterizes EOCs as "multi-agency coordination centers" and as such they do not have to be organized around ICS. The NIMS states in the command and Management chapter (chapter 2, section BP that "EOCs are organized by major functional discipline, by jurisdiction or more likely by some combination thereof." To be compliant with NIMS, state and locals must focus on the core functions to be performed in the EOC (coordination; communications; resource dispatch, tracking and management; and information collection, analysis and dissemination).