



Handout 1.2—NIMS Resource Management Concepts and Principles

The **National Incident Management System (NIMS)** guides all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector in their efforts to “prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, in order to reduce the loss of life and property and harm to the environment.” NIMS incorporates the following concepts and principles¹:

1. CONCEPTS

The underlying concepts of resource management are as follows:

- **Consistency**—Provision of a standard method for identifying, acquiring, allocating, and tracking resources
- **Standardization**—Resource classification to improve the effectiveness of mutual aid agreements or assistance agreements
- **Coordination**—Facilitation and integration of resources for optimal benefit
- **Use**—Incorporation of available resources from all entities, where appropriate, in resource management planning efforts
- **Information Management**—Provisions for the thorough integration of communications and information management elements into resource management organizations, processes, technologies, and decision support
- **Credentialing**—Use of criteria that ensure consistent training, licensure, and certification standards

¹ This handout summarizes the NIMS concepts and principles presented in the *National Incident Management System* (FEMA Publication P-150, December 2008), www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMS_core.pdf



2. PRINCIPLES

The foundations of resource management are based on the following five interwoven principles:

a. Planning

Coordinated planning, training to common standards, and inclusive exercises provide a foundation for the interoperability and compatibility of resources throughout an incident. Jurisdictions should work together in advance of an incident to develop plans for identifying, ordering, managing, and employing resources.

b. Use of Agreements

Agreements among all parties providing or requesting resources are necessary to enable effective and efficient resource management during incident operations. This includes standing agreements and contracts for services and supplies.

c. Categorizing Resources

Resources are organized by category, kind, and type, including size, capacity, capability, skill, and other characteristics. This makes the resource-ordering and dispatch process more efficient and ensures that needed resources are received.

d. Resource Identification and Ordering

The resource management process uses standardized methods to identify, order, mobilize, and track the resources required to support incident management activities. Those with resource management responsibilities perform these tasks either at the request of the Incident Commander (IC) or in accordance with planning requirements. Identification and ordering of resources are intertwined.

e. Effective Management of Resources

Resource management involves acquisition procedures, management information, and redundant systems and protocols for ordering, mobilizing, dispatching, and demobilizing resources.

(1) Acquisition Procedures

Acquisition procedures are used to obtain resources to support operational requirements. Examples include mission tasking, contracting, drawing from existing stocks, and making small purchases. A key aspect of the inventorying process is determining whether an organization needs to warehouse specific items prior to an incident. Material resources may be acquired in advance and stockpiled or obtained “just in time” through appropriate pre-incident contracts. An integral part of acquisition procedures is developing methods and protocols for the handling and distribution of donated resources.



(2) Management Information Systems

These systems are used to provide decision support information to managers by collecting, updating, and processing data, and tracking resources. They enhance resource status information flow and provide real-time data in fast-paced environments in which different jurisdictions, emergency management and response personnel, and their affiliated organizations are managing different aspects of the incident and should coordinate their efforts. Examples of management information systems include resource tracking, transportation tracking, inventory management, reporting, and geographical information systems.

(3) Redundant Information Systems

Those with resource management responsibilities should be able to identify and activate backup systems to manage resources in the event that the primary resource management information system is disrupted or unavailable. Management information systems should also have sufficiently redundant and diverse power supplies and communication capabilities. If possible, the backup storage should not be co-located, and the information should be backed up at least every 24 hours during the incident.

(4) Ordering, Mobilization, and Demobilization Protocols

Protocols are followed when requesting resources, prioritizing requests, activating and mobilizing resources to incidents, and returning resources to normal status. Preparedness organizations develop standard protocols for use within their jurisdictions. Examples include tracking systems that identify the location and status of mobilized or dispatched resources, and procedures to demobilize resources and return them to their original locations and status.

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