

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT NIMS IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (IHEs)

1. How do we learn more about emergency management for schools and institutions of higher education (IHEs)?

The U.S. Departments of Education and Homeland Security offer numerous supports geared at building school and IHE emergency management capacity:

“Emergency Planning” Website

The U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) offers the “Emergency Planning” Website as part of its *Lead and Manage My School* series, a group of websites designed to support administrators. It is accessible at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/index.html>.

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center

ED also offers training, resources, and technical assistance to the education community through its Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center. The REMS TA Center is accessible at <http://rems.ed.gov>.

"School Preparedness" Website

DHS offers resources to the education community through its website named "School Preparedness." School Preparedness presents information and resources addressing funding and planning as well as presenting links to applicable organizations. It is accessible at http://www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/programs/gc_1183486267373.shtm.

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS) Web Portal

DHS established LLIS to help first responders, emergency planners and managers, and homeland security partners share information to prevent, prepare for, and respond to terrorism. The secure web portal includes effective practices and lessons learned information, including a section on school emergency planning. Registration information is accessible at <http://www.llis.gov>.

2. How do I learn more about the National Incident Management System (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS), and National Response Framework (NRF) for schools and IHEs?

Both DHS and ED offer schools and IHEs guidance, tools, and resources addressing the NIMS, ICS, and NRF. DHS offers resources to the collective emergency management community as well as resources specific to schools and IHEs.

The National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Integration (IMSI) Division

The Secretary of Homeland Security, through the National Integration Center (NIC), Incident Management Systems Integration (IMSI) Division (formerly known as the NIMS Integration Center), publishes the standards, guidelines, and compliance protocols for determining whether a Federal, State, tribal, or local government has implemented NIMS. Additionally, the Secretary, through the NIC, manages publication and collaboratively, with other departments and agencies, develops standards, guidelines, compliance procedures, and protocols for all aspects of NIMS. Questions regarding NIMS can be directed to FEMA-NIMS@dhs.gov or 202-646-3850. More information available at: <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm>

Emergency Management Institute (EMI)

EMI is the FEMA training branch and provides training to the emergency management field. For example, EMI administers the “Introduction to the ICS for Schools” (IS-100.SC), a training course for schools and IHEs developed collaboratively by DHS and ED. School emergency management officials can access the free, on-line independent study training courses (including many of the required NIMS training courses) through EMI’s website accessible at <http://training.fema.gov/>.

REMS TA Center

The REMS TA Center produces and disseminates materials promoting NIMS implementation. For example, NIMS is addressed in publications and trainings, including the *Emergency Management for Schools* training. These are accessible at <http://rems.ed.gov>.

3. Do schools and IHEs have to be NIMS compliant?

Because all schools and IHEs are integral components of every community and its government, it is recommended that all schools and IHEs — regardless of whether or not they are recipients of Federal preparedness funding — support the implementation of NIMS.

All K-12 schools and IHEs — urban, suburban, rural; large or small — receiving Federal preparedness monies via the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and/or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are required to support the implementation of NIMS.

4. What do schools and IHEs need to do in order to be compliant with NIMS?

Schools and IHEs should complete the prescribed activities as listed in the *NIMS Implementation Activities for Schools and Institutions of Higher Education* and fully document their efforts towards achieving NIMS compliance. A checklist and detailed guidance are accessible at http://rems.ed.gov/index.php?page=resources_NIMS.

5. How are NIMS training courses accessed?

NIMS courses are administered and accessible in multiple formats:

1. Instructor

Schools and campuses can work with their community partners to identify a qualified instructor to conduct training. The NIC Incident Management Systems Division developed and provides guidance in the Five-Year NIMS Training Plan, “Course Summaries” (Appendix C). These summaries clearly state course objectives, discussion topics, and minimum requirements for instructional time and instructor qualifications per course. This guidance does not preclude any State, tribal, or local partner from maintaining more restrictive instructor qualifications. Any agency or organization sponsoring NIMS training is responsible for ensuring that the materials being taught adhere to the guidelines provided. The sponsoring organization must also verify the qualifications of the instructors based on the guidance provided by the NIC. Additionally, the certificates of course completion are also the responsibility of the sponsoring agency or organization. The Five-Year NIMS Training Plan is accessible at <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/NIMSTrainingCourses#item5>.

2. On-line, Independent Study

Emergency Management Institute (EMI) is one of FEMA's training branches and develops training materials supporting NIMS, and ICS, and additional emergency management training materials. EMI offers numerous online, independent study courses that are free and include certificates of completion. The IS- 100, 200, 700, and 800 courses are all available online as Independent Study (IS) courses offered through EMI at <http://training.fema.gov/IS>. (NOTE: ICS-300 and ICS-400 are not available online and must be taken in the classroom.)

3. State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agencies

Local or State Emergency Management Agencies often offer training in a classroom setting. School emergency management officials should contact their partners for details on course schedules and logistics. To complete ICS-300 and ICS-400, personnel should contact their local or State emergency management agency for course dates and locations in their area.

6. What training courses are required to be compliant with NIMS?

The Department of Homeland Security's National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Integration (IMSI) Division has identified a series of courses that are required for NIMS compliance. To date, these courses include the following:

- IS-700: NIMS, An Introduction
- IS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS-800: National Response Framework, An Introduction
- IS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- ICS-300: Intermediate ICS
- ICS-400: Advanced ICS

NOTE:

* Completion of course IS-100.SC: Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS) for Schools, or IS-100. HE: Introduction to ICS for Higher Education, both constitute completion of course IS-100. These courses were specifically designed to provide ICS training within a K-12 school-based or IHE-based context. There are additional versions of the IS-100 course that have been modified to meet the specific roles and responsibilities of professionals in other disciplines. All IS-100 courses use the same curriculum and provide examples and learning activities unique to each discipline. Therefore, completion of any of these IS-100 courses by school and IHE emergency management personnel also constitutes completion of IS-100.

7. Should all education personnel take the same NIMS courses?

Schools, LEAs, and IHEs should identify *key personnel* to receive training based on their roles and responsibilities in the overall emergency management program as well as the specific responsibilities related to emergency preparedness, incident management, or response. For training purposes, ED recommends schools, LEAs, and IHEs identify their personnel in the following four categories: 1.) Executive Leaders, 2) General Personnel, 3.) Command Staff, and 4.) Incident Managers.

1.) Executive Leaders must be familiar with the comprehensive systems supporting emergency management, even though they may not have a designated role in the incident command system. response. Executive leaders are often responsible for making financial, administrative, and managerial decisions supporting the school or IHE emergency management

2.) General Personnel are those with any role in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response.

3.) Command Staff are personnel assigned to lead any key campus emergency management effort; they have a specific role within the ICS.

4.) Incident Commanders: Personnel with a leadership role in command (e.g., district, school or IHE Incident Commander, School Police Chief). These individuals are typically obligated to command and manage incidents that occur on the school or IHE campus in the absence of traditional incident response personnel (local Fire Chief, local Police Chief). These personnel also include those school officials, including school police, who would likely be integrated into a more advanced ICS role (e.g., unified command) should it become necessary.

For more information on required and recommended NIMS training for various education personnel, please refer to “Key Personnel and NIMS Training for Schools and Institutions of Higher Education” accessible at http://rem.s.ed.gov/index.php?page=resources_NIMS.

8. Can our local law enforcement official be our NIMS instructor?

Yes. However, any agency or organization sponsoring NIMS training is responsible for ensuring that the materials being taught adhere to the guidelines provided in the Five-Year NIMS Training Plan “Course Summaries” (Appendix C). The sponsoring organization must also verify the qualifications of the instructors based on the guidance provided by the IMSI. Obtaining and tracking certificates of course completion are also the responsibility of the sponsoring agency or organization.

9. How should we track our progress towards NIMS implementation?

NIMS implementation is self-assessed. Each school, district, or IHE entity receiving Federal funding should develop an internal tracking system for monitoring their progress towards full implementation of NIMS. Educational entities should develop a tracking system to identify the status of each activity (e.g., in progress, complete) and details for accomplishing the others.

10. How is my district or IHE held accountable for being NIMS compliant? What should I do to demonstrate NIMS compliance?

IHEs and LEAs can demonstrate their support of NIMS implementation in a variety of ways as they achieve and complete the implementation activities. For example, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grantees and Emergency Management for Higher Education (EMHE) grantees through the U.S. Department of Education submit a “Program-Specific Assurances” form with their grant applications whereby the Authorized Representatives sign a form indicating that the district or IHE will become NIMS compliant by the end of the grant period. In addition to that approach, grantees may be asked to demonstrate NIMS compliance during on-site reviews, performance reports, or interim performance calls with Federal staff.

In addition to grantee accountability, there are a variety of other ways LEAs and IHEs can demonstrate their support of the NIMS. For example, they should maintain detailed documentation of the steps taken to ensure NIMS compliance. One way to document progress towards NIMS implementation is through use of the “Checklist” available at: http://rem.s.ed.gov/index.php?page=resources_NIMS. Finally, some LEAs or IHEs might opt to work with their local or State emergency management partners to reports steps towards NIMS implementation via the NIMS Compliance Assistance Support Tool (NIMSCAST). Information on NIMSCAST is available at: <https://www.fema.gov/nimscast/index.jsp>.

11. What if our Superintendent or Provost wants to be both the Incident Commander and the Public Information Officer in an emergency. Does this model work under ICS?

No. Under ICS, each person has one role, not multiple roles. Each role under ICS has specific responsibilities and requires different skill sets and specific training. The role of the Incident Commander (IC) is a “full-time job” and should be assigned to the individual at an LEA or IHE who has the most emergency management experience or expertise and responsibilities for managing a response. In many cases, particularly at the school and district level, that IC role will then transfer to a local first responder once fire or law enforcement arrives on the scene.

ED recommends that executive leaders like Superintendents and Provosts consider taking two courses: G-402 Incident Command System Overview for Executive/Senior Officials and IS-700 NIMS, An Introduction so that they will have general familiarity with the NIMS and the ICS structure. However, as executive leaders, superintendents and provosts will often be needed to make high-level decisions during an incident (opening school, closing campus, allocating resources, etc.) and as such are most likely not also the best candidates to be serving in either the IC or the public information officer role.

12. I am a FY 2009 REMS or FY 2009 EMHE grantee. What counts as NIMS training courses when I calculate my baseline of NIMS courses for our GPRA reporting?

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has outlined a series of courses that are required for NIMS compliance. These courses include: IS-100, IS-200, IS-300, IS-400, IS-700, and IS-800. All of these courses should be counted in your baseline and final numbers. In addition to these courses, DHS, our education partners in the field, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have identified a series of other courses that support emergency management efforts at schools and campuses. To date, they include: IS-701, IS-702, IS-703, IS-706, E-361, IS-362, E-363, and G402. If individuals at your LEA or in your institution have taken these courses, you may count them in your Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) data analysis, as well. If there are additional FEMA certified courses that you would like to propose be counted in your baseline and final data for the GPRA measure on NIMS course completions, please email your Federal Project Officer (FPO) a request that includes the name and number of the course, and a justification for why it should count. Your FPO will review your request and respond with guidance.

13. I am a FY 2009 REMS or FY 2009 EMHE grantee. Who should count as "key personnel" when I document NIMS course completions for our GPRA reporting?

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has worked closely with the National Integration Center (NIC)'s Incident Management Systems Integration (IMSI) Division (IMSI) to provide guidance regarding which staff members and employees the emergency management team should consider "key personnel" at your institution. Please refer to this guidance addressing key personnel and training provided on the REMS TA Center Web site, accessible at: http://rems.ed.gov/index.php?page=resources_NIMS.

In addition, some prior grantees have inquired about volunteer, part-time and wage staff. Because employment status and rules vary greatly from institution to institution, ED cannot provide overarching guidance on the particular employee situation at your institution. Rather, we would suggest that you consider the role of the various individuals on your campus (albeit volunteer, part-time or contract employees) and the role they might have in emergency management response. If you feel that some of those individuals would play a vital role in the response to an emergency on your campus, then "yes," you

may count them in your NIMS course completion data collection. Please remember to include them in both your baseline tabulations and your final tabulations. If you determine those individuals do NOT play a vital role in emergency response on your campus, please do not include them in either data set. Also, please provide a narrative description of how you defined "key personnel" in the "explanation of progress" section of your ED-524B project status charts so that ED may fully understand your data.