



State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE
POST OFFICE BOX 7068
WEST TRENTON NJ 08628-0068
(609) 882-2000

RICHARD J. CODEY
Acting Governor

PETER C. HARVEY
Attorney General

COLONEL JOSEPH R. FUENTES
Superintendent

October 26, 2005

Dear Elected Officials:

As part of a new national preparedness vision, the federal government has created a National Incident Management System, which is commonly referred to as "the NIMS." The NIMS consists of a number of components that, when fully implemented, will provide a common system of emergency incident management that will be interoperable nationwide. This means that first responders from New Jersey will be able to provide aid in other States, such as Louisiana, without learning a new system of incident or resource management. Within New Jersey, implementation of the NIMS will mean that police, fire, emergency medical, public works, public health, emergency management and other first responders will all operate under a single command and management system, increasing our capabilities and making our response system even more efficient.

The NIMS on-scene command component is based upon the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Incident Command System; the same system that has been used by New Jersey's emergency responders for years. Many of your local firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical responders and emergency managers already have training and experience using this system. The NIMS also provides an excellent framework for planning and organizing non-emergency events, such as community fairs, parades, high school graduations, etc.

In order to assure national implementation of the NIMS, President Bush has required that all federal departments and agencies require State and local institutionalization of the NIMS as a prerequisite to federal preparedness assistance. Institutionalization means that NIMS is adopted and implemented for everyday use by first responders. So far, sixty federal grant programs have been identified as requiring NIMS as a prerequisite to award. These include:

1. Department of Justice - COPS Interoperable Communications Technology Program
2. Department of Homeland Security - State Homeland Security Grant Program
3. Department of Homeland Security - Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program
4. Department of Homeland Security - Emergency Management Performance Grants
5. Department of Health and Human Services - Metropolitan Medical Response System
6. Department of Education - School Emergency Response and Crisis Management Plan Discretionary Grant Program
7. Department of Transportation - Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Training and Planning Grants



The full list of grant programs requiring NIMS can be viewed on FEMA's website at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/federal_prep_grant_prog.pdf. Attorney General Peter C. Harvey has already provided certification to the Department of Homeland Security that New Jersey is meeting the NIMS requirements to maintain grant eligibility.

At the recommendation of the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, on August 5, 2005, Governor Codey issued an Executive Order adopting NIMS, requiring its use on all emergency incidents and requiring the State Office of Emergency Management to develop an aggressive schedule for training first responders and other officials that will use NIMS or will need to be aware of NIMS concepts. The State Office of Emergency Management is actively working with your County Emergency Management Coordinator to implement a training schedule for first responders and elected officials. The amount of training required will increase with individual incident management responsibility. Entry level responders and elected officials will need four to eight hours of training while senior incident managers, such as police chiefs, fire chiefs, etc., will need more than forty hours of training over the next two years.

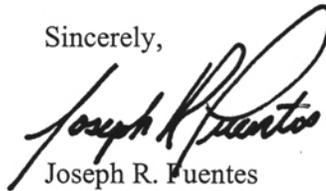
As the State Director of Emergency Management, I will be working closely with the Commissioner of Health, the State Fire Marshall and the Attorney General to identify ways to minimize the impact of these federal training requirements on your first responders. Already, the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force has created a virtual academy featuring an on-line version of the ICS-100: Introduction to ICS course (<http://www.njlearn.com>) and are working on other NIMS compliant courses to be offered on-line.

Governor Codey's Executive Order is available from the State website at <http://www.state.nj.us/infobank/circular/eoc50.htm> and I ask that you review and share it with the first responders in your community. In the upcoming months, the ICS-402: ICS Summary for Executives will be offered in your county and I encourage you and your fellow elected officials to attend. This course is designed to give you an overview of the NIMS Incident Command System that will facilitate a greater understanding of the challenges facing your local emergency services leadership.

Additional information regarding the NIMS implementation in New Jersey can be obtained from a new website at <http://nims.nj.gov> or through your County Emergency Management Coordinator.

I thank you for your assistance in our NIMS implementation efforts.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Fuentes
Colonel
Superintendent
State Director