THE NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: HOW TO EDUCATE THE LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that the appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: __________________________
Abstract

The problem was that the Town of Wellesley, Massachusetts, did not have a plan to train the local fire department on the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The fire department needs to be NIMS compliant to maintain eligibility for federal funding for preparedness assistance. The fire department needs to adopt the NIMS as this system provides a consistent national standard for emergency incident management that will enhance safety and efficiency among first responders at emergency incidents. The purpose of this study was to develop an outline for necessary training on the NIMS and to identify departmental documents that need to be modified to become NIMS compliant. The outlines generated by this research clarifies the training and document review process necessary to facilitate the introduction and integration of the NIMS into the fire department. This was an action research project. The research questions were:

1. What are the benefits to a community fire department in adopting NIMS?
2. What organizations provide guidance for the implementation and the training of NIMS?
3. What are comparable Massachusetts fire department programs for training their personnel on the topic of NIMS?
4. What are the most feasible methods to educate firefighters about NIMS?
5. What departmental documentation needs to be modified to support the integration of NIMS into the department?
The procedures involved interviews of various individuals with topic expertise, and a thorough review of available literature. The information derived from the research procedures answered the research questions.

The recommendation based on this study, was for the local fire department to follow the outlines created by this research for the selection of training and document compliance review to integrate NIMS into their emergency response operations.
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Introduction

The problem is that the Town of Wellesley Fire Department has not trained its personnel on the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This department must have a plan to educate the firefighters on NIMS as this system is built upon FIRESCOPE Incident Command System but has been modified to achieve greater interoperability between organizations responding to an incident. One area of concern is that Wellesley continues at the present time to use codes, and signals that are not consistent with the communications interoperability goals of NIMS. Presidential Homeland Security directive #5 requires that all federal departments and agencies make the adoption of the NIMS a requirement prior to the awarding of any federal emergency preparedness funds. Additionally, Wellesley Fire Department should strive to meet the standardization and interoperability goals of the NIMS to improve interaction between responding organizations at an incident and to maintain eligibility for federal preparedness assistance funding programs.

The purpose of this research is to develop an outline that will serve as a plan to select training that will educate the firefighters on the NIMS in the community of Wellesley and to identify key departmental documents (standard operating procedures, notices, manuals, etc) to support the integration of NIMS into our department. The purpose is also to create a knowledgeable understanding of NIMS for department personnel that are often charged with operating and communicating with other local, state and federal personnel. This is an action research project. The research questions are:

1. What are the benefits to a community fire department in adopting NIMS?
2. What organizations provide guidance for the implementation and the training of NIMS?

3. What are comparable Massachusetts fire department programs for training their personnel on the topic of NIMS?

4. What are the most feasible methods to educate firefighters about NIMS?

5. What departmental documentation needs to be modified to support the integration of NIMS into the department?

Background and Significance

The Wellesley Fire Department had agreed to adopt the NIMS in our FIREACT Grant Applications beginning in FY2005. The NIMS was a result of the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) released in February 2003. The HSPD-5 mandates that the NIMS be adopted in order to receive federal prearrangement assistance funding. In order to adopt the NIMS, the document must be read and integrated into the organizational operation. The integration plan needs to take into account the benefits of NIMS, the methods to educate the personnel, the most feasible method to accomplish the education and lastly the amending of departmental documents to support the NIMS. The departmental document review needs to consider all standard operating procedures, notices, manuals and other relevant departmental literature.

At present, the Wellesley Fire Department has adopted the NIMS in principal, not yet educating its personnel on the system or fully integrating the NIMS into its organizational operations. After a conversation with the Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director, Kevin Rooney, it was concluded that the development of an
outline that will serve as a plan to educate firefighters on NIMS and to integrate NIMS into all departmental documents would be a valuable asset to our department (Personal Communication, July 1, 2004). This research is important to the Wellesley Fire Department for several reasons. First, this research will identify the benefits to the Wellesley Fire Department of implementing NIMS. Second, this research will provide information necessary to develop an outline to educate firefighters on the topic of NIMS. Third, it is anticipated that the findings of this research will become the basis for establishing an outline for the identification of departmental documents that need modification to fully implement NIMS into the Wellesley Fire Department. Furthermore, this research will be completed to add to the body of knowledge available for other organizations to evaluate the benefit of NIMS and the necessary steps to fully integrate it into their organization.

This Applied Research Project (ARP) relates to material taught at the National Fire Academy (NFA) in the Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management (EAFSOEM). This course involved the process of preparing senior staff officers in the administrative functions that are necessary to effectively manage the operational components of Emergency Management. This course presented a series of challenges surrounding a mock community in order to demonstrate the value and purpose of Emergency Management Operating Systems. Having a clear understanding of the issues as presented in the various units within this course assisted in identifying areas within my own community that needed improvement. The successful completion of this course is to return to your community and begin the process of identifying and resolving a weakness in the Emergency Operations of your community. The EAFSOEM
course discusses the values associated with the utilization of the incident command system. This course clearly identified the need for clear concise communication not only within the fire service but also among all our emergency response partners such as police, public works and public health. It is the incident command system that provides structural organization to the commanding control of an incident. There is a need to identify any differences between our current incident command system and the newly created NIMS. Additionally, there needs to be significant review of all departmental documentation to insure our organizational compliance with the intent of NIMS.

This project relates to the United States Fire Administration operational objective, “To respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues”, by establishing a plan to effectively and completely integrate NIMS into our departmental operations (NFA, 2003a, p. II-2).

Lastly, this research will provide the Wellesley Fire Department with the information and plans necessary to fully implement NIMS into all aspects of our departmental operations. The significance of this project is that it will benefit our fire department by providing a comprehensive outline that will identify the benefit of NIMS and identify the organizations that provide assistance with the education and integration of NIMS into our organization.

Literature Review

The NFA’s Learning Resource Center (LRC) was the primary source of research materials. The materials were secured through the interlibrary loan procedure and two separate on site research opportunities in April and September 2004. The purpose of this literature review is to discover relevant information on identifying the benefits to
the fire department in the integration of NIMS into the departmental operations. This review will examine the programs used by other comparable communities’ fire departments. This review will identify those organizations that provide direction to the education and implementation aspects of the NIMS. In addition, this review will discover information on the most feasible method of educating firefighters on the NIMS. Lastly, this review will identify those departmental documents that need to be modified in order to support the implementation of NIMS within the departmental operations. The process of implementation of NIMS within our fire department will be guided by an outline created as a result of this research.

For the purposes of this literature review the first significant document reviewed is the Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5), Management of Domestic Incidents. This document directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS). As stated in the preface, the NIMS document represents a core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes to enable effective efficient and collaborative incident management at all levels. The Presidential Directive requires the adoption of NIMS as a requirement to be eligible to receive federal preparedness assistance funding beginning in fiscal year 2005. The NIMS document is 152 pages that introduce the six major sections that comprise this system. The six major categories are: Command and Management, Preparedness, Resource Management, Communications and Information Management, Supporting Technologies, and Ongoing Management and Maintenance (Department of Homeland Security, 2004a).
The Secretary of Homeland Security is required by (HSPD-5) to establish a NIMS Integration Center (NIC) that will be responsible for developing ongoing revisions and updates to NIMS. “The NIC is responsible for developing a national program for NIMS education and awareness including specific instruction on the purpose and content of this document and NIMS in general” (Department of Homeland Security, 2004a, p. 60). The NIC will be responsible for all revisions and updates as needed to maintain the quality and performance of NIMS.

The Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced June 29, 2004 in a press release that a new online course was available to educate the first responders and other responding organizations on the topic of NIMS. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge stated,

NIMS establishes standard incident management processes, protocols and procedures so that all responders - including those at the federal, state, tribal and local level - can coordinate their responses, share a common focus and place full emphasis on resolving the event. This new course introduces NIMS in a way that is easy and accessible to the nation’s emergency responders. The training experts at Homeland Security’s Emergency Management Institute created the online course, which takes about three hours to complete. The course can be found at: http://training.fema.gov/EMIWEB/IS/is700.asp (Department of Homeland Security, 2004b).

The DHS identified FEMA as the coordinating body to maintain the all hazards approach taken by FEMA in prior training initiatives.
“Emergency management is a departmental priority, and enhancing the capabilities of first responders and emergency managers is key in responding to all hazards,” said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. Brown additionally stated, “This new online course is one of many ways Secretary Ridge and I are working with our partners to put NIMS into practice for the American people” (Department of Homeland Security, 2004c).

Ridge (2004, March 1) wrote that the NIMS incorporates the best practices currently in use by incident managers at all levels. He additionally states that effective incident management in the homeland security environment we now face, involves new concepts, processes and protocols that will require additional development and refinement over time. The adoption of NIMS will result in a consistent nationwide approach for federal, state and local emergency responders to work more effectively and efficiently together. An additional incentive for the adoption of NIMS is clearly stated by Ridge as he emphasizes that the adoption of NIMS as a condition for future federal funding for preparedness assistance beginning in fiscal year 2005.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (2004) has provided its membership with information about finding resources related to the NIMS. The following information was posted in the IAFC newsletter:

The NIMS web page, www.fema.gov/nims, offers emergency managers a complete listing of NIMS requirements, tools and resources, and general information on the new incident management and maintenance tool. The assessment process, compliance criteria, NIMS-related training, and
implementation timelines are some of the issues that will be addressed via the web page. In addition, prospective NIMS users can share concerns by submitting e-mail to: Nims-integration-center@dhs.gov.

The NIC (2004) of the Department of Homeland Security outlines the benefits of NIMS as posted on the NIC web site. The benefits of the NIMS will be significant:

- Standardized organizational structures, processes and procedures;
- Standards for planning, training and exercising;
- Personnel qualification standards;
- Equipment acquisition and certification standards;
- Interoperable communications processes, procedures and systems;
- Information management systems with a commonly accepted architecture;
- Supporting technologies – voice and data communication systems, information systems, data display systems, specialized technologies; and
- Publication management processes and activities.

In a Sept. 8, 2004, letter to the nation's governors, the Secretary of Homeland Security outlined the minimum requirements for states and territories to comply with the NIMS. NIMS is the first-ever standardized approach to incident management and response. Developed by the Department of Homeland Security and released in March 2004, it establishes a uniform set of processes and procedures that emergency responders at all levels of government will use to conduct response operations (NIMS Integration Center, 2004).
The FEMA, as part of the DHS recently established the National Incident Management System Integration Center (NIC) to lead the effort in maintaining and developing the NIMS. Under Secretary of Emergency Preparedness and Response Michael Brown stated,“This multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary National Incident Management System Integration Center will provide a valuable resource to better coordinate our response to all-hazards, the establishment of the NIC allows for a mechanism to provide ongoing coordination among federal, state, local and tribal incident management entities with emergency responders to coordinate our mission to better protect our citizens” (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2004).

Molino, writing in *Homeland First Response*, states “the relationship between Incident Command System (ICS) to NIMS under HSPD-5 is really quite simple: NIMS is intended to standardize the nationwide approach to the typical domestic incidents, as well as those on the scale of 9-11 events” (2004, p. 30). Molino writes, “NIMS implementation is a local issue and one that transcends all levels of government. Personnel at all levels ... will ultimately execute and enhance systems that will collectively become an effective national incident management system” (2004, p. 32).

Molino identifies the problems associated with the basic communication issues such as the terminology of the various emergency responders. One attempt to improve communications among first responders according to Molino (2004) is FEMA’s National Mutual Aid Glossary of Terms and Definitions. The National Mutual Aid Glossary is a continually growing and evolving document. Lastly, Molino provides the web address
to view the glossary at: www.fema.gov/prepardness/mutual_aid.shtm and an e-mail address for readers to send in terms to DHS at: tanyabatiche@associates.dhs.gov.

The Massachusetts State Fire Marshall, among other duties operates the state fire academy under the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services (DFS), sent a memorandum to all Fire Departments regarding an update on the NIMS. Massachusetts Fire Marshall stated, “Our interagency work with federal agencies continues regarding the NIMS… as part of the research undertaken the department of fire services consulted with Dr. Dennis O’Nieal, Superintendent of the National Fire Academy, and Mr. Adam Piskura, director of the Connecticut Fire Academy and president of the North American Fire Training Directors Association.” The memorandum went on to identify the federal guidelines for ICS and the NIMS. The following approved ICS educational components of NIMS were identified. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) ICS training will be used as a model for course curricula and materials applicable to NIMS:

- ICS-100, Introduction to ICS
- ICS-200, Basic ICS
- ICS-300, Intermediate ICS
- ICS-400, Advanced ICS

The National Fire Academy and Emergency Management Institute both follow this model in their ICS training curricula (Massachusetts State Fire Marshal, 2004).

The NIMS fact sheet for emergency responders states the two major differences between NIMS ICS and NFA’s ICS, is first that NIMS ICS allows for the intelligence and information functions can be used in the following manners:

- Officer in the Command Staff
○ Unit within Planning Section

○ Branch within the Operations Section

○ Separate General Staff section

The second major difference is that the Command Staff position known as the Information Officer will be known as the Public Information Officer (Department of Homeland Security, 2004d).

There are four levels of training for the Incident Command System (ICS) ranging from basic ICS 100 to advanced ICS 400. The first two courses ICS 100 and ICS 200 are available as independent study courses offered online from the Emergency Management Institute (EMI). Each of these classes takes approximately three hours to complete and a final exam is submitted online to EMI. These courses are found online at http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/crslist.asp. The two advanced ICS courses require a direct delivery of material from an instructor, which are offered by EMI at their Emmitsburg, Maryland facility on the National Fire Academy campus, additional information can be found at the previously listed web site. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) offers direct delivery of the advanced ICS courses at their state and regional offices. Information on course scheduling can be retrieved from the MEMA web site found at http://www.maa.gov/portal/index.jsp?pageID=agcc&agid=mema&agca=
trainingandavent. The ICS 300 requires 24 hours of classroom training to complete the curriculum. The ICS course requires 40 hours of classroom and simulations to complete the curriculum.

A conversation with MEMA’s Acting Training Manager, Barbara Legatowicz
was conducted to determine the recommended level of ICS training for local fire departments and to inquire about the possibility to conducting the training at Wellesley Fire Department Headquarters to limit the financial impact of sending on duty or overtime personnel to MEMA locations (Personal communication, October 14, 2004). Barbara Legatowicz recommended beginning with the IS 700 for NIMS, followed by the IS ICS 100 offered by EMI. MEMA’s strategy for minimal impact on the local department’s budget according to Lagatowicz, is to develop and strengthen the train the trainer program for departments to handle their own training. The train the trainer program for ICS 200 – ICS 400, must have completed the initial courses and the trainer program focuses entirely on presentation techniques for the instructional material. The level of training for various fire department personnel needs to be an internal departmental decision.

A discussion was held with Wellesley Fire Chief Kevin K. Rooney about identifying departmental documentation that should be revised to be compatible with NIMS and possible training programs to educate the fire personnel on this topic (Personal Communication, October 7, 2004). In our discussion the following documents were identified as potentially non-compliant with NIMS; Consolidated Dispatch Manual, Standard Operating Procedures, and General Orders.

In summary, there was sufficient information available on the benefits of NIMS. Discussions with Fire Chief Rooney identified areas of consideration to review for NIMS compatibility and to plan possible training programs to educate the fire personnel on the NIMS. There were no other fire departments that have introduced the NIMS or have begun the process of identifying an educational plan to implement
NIMS. There were several major federal and state government agencies that offer information on training programs for NIMS and ICS.

Procedures

The purpose of this project is to develop outlines for a plan to educate firefighters on NIMS and to identify departmental documents that should be reviewed to verify NIMS compliance. Action research methodologies will be employed to help guide the project to find answers to the research questions. The research will result in the establishment of written outlines for a NIMS educational plan for firefighters and departmental documents that need to be reviewed for NIMS compliance for the local fire department.

Research and data collection began with a literature review at the National Fire Academy’s (NFA) Learning Resources Center (LRC). A search for relevant literature was conducted using the online card catalog and in person visits to the National Fire Academy’s Learning Resource Center. Selected materials were received using the interlibrary loan procedure. The Wellesley and Natick, Massachusetts Public Libraries participated in the interlibrary loan process and provided direct materials. These libraries provided the necessary information to provide sufficient materials for this research project. Journals, professional fire service literature and web sites of FEMA, MEMA, IAFC, DHS, NFA, NIC and DFS and various internet sites on the subject of NIMS were reviewed.

A discussion with Wellesley, Massachusetts Fire Chief Kevin K. Rooney on October 7, 2004 regarding the introduction of NIMS to the personnel of the fire department and to identify those departmental documents that may require revision or
review to determine if they are compatible with the NIMS. This discussion was
conducted to utilize the 31 years of departmental experience of Chief Rooney and to
seek the formal support to implement the outcome of this research.

A conversation with MEMA’s Acting Training Manager, Barbara Legatowicz on
October 14, 2004 was conducted to determine which level of ICS training would be
appropriate for local fire department’s personnel and what MEMA resources are
available to conduct the NIMS and related ICS training.

The criteria to focus the research project literature review will be, first the
information needs to be relevant to the subject and research project purpose, second, the
information should be current as possible. This research paper will be written
according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 5th Edition
(APA).

Questionnaire

The research will include a questionnaire (Appendix B). The questionnaire was
developed to gather information to answer the following questions:

1. Has your department trained your personnel on the NIMS?

2. Does your department have a plan that outlines the educational training
   necessary to implement NIMS? If your answer is YES, please forward a copy to
   my attention.

3. Does your department have an outline that identifies the organizational
documentation that need to be revised to comply with NIMS? If your answer is
   YES, please forward a copy to my attention.

4. If an outline was created that outlined the necessary training to educate the fire
   personnel on the NIMS, would you like a copy?
5. If an outline was created that outlined the departmental documentation that may need revision to comply with NIMS, would you like a copy?

The questionnaire was sent to the area departments that are considered “comparable” to the Wellesley Fire Department. This comparable group listed in Appendix C is that same group used to determine collective bargaining issues as these departments are comparable in town government, departmental organization, size, operations and fiscal ability. The purpose of this questionnaire was to determine our department’s position relative to comparable departments in introducing NIMS. Another objective of the questionnaire is to determine if any of these departments developed a plan to train their personnel and has their department determined if their departmental documents are compliant with the NIMS. Lastly, this questionnaire was to determine which departments would like an outline that may assist them in selecting training to introduce NIMS, upgrade their departments ICS knowledge and to identify departmental documents that should be reviewed to verify departmental compliance with NIMS. Appendix A is the cover letter sent to explain the Executive Fire Officer Research Project and the purpose of the questionnaire. The cover letter in Appendix A was sent to the Chiefs of 13 comparable communities to introduce and explain the questionnaire in Appendix B.

Population

The 13 comparable communities chosen represent 100% of comparable communities used by the Town of Wellesley Human Resources Department and the Town of Wellesley Firefighters Union during labor negotiations in Appendix C. The responses from these communities will then be analyzed to understand how other
departments are educating their personnel on NIMS and reviewing their departmental
documentation for NIMS compliance. Descriptive statistics will be used to calculate and
interpret the data generated from the questionnaire. Specifically, the raw number and
percentages are provided in Appendix D.

Assumptions

The author, for the purposes of this research, assumed that the responses given
by those responding to questionnaire were complete and honest. The author assumed
that the individuals of the organizations that responded to the various questions on the
questionnaire did so with the goal of providing information that will improve the
understanding and current situation relative to the NIMS in the fire service.

Finally, it is assumed by the author that although no other formal method of
analysis was found during the research for the comparison of NIMS educational plans
or departmental document review for NIMS compliance in comparable communities,
the methods used by the author still provide significant data that can be accurately used
to answer the research questions.

Limitations

The author recognizes several limitations with this research. First, as with any
applied research project, the limited time period of six months inhibits a more detailed
and expanded research paper. There is a great deal of evolving information available
on the topic of NIMS thus limiting the ability to review all related materials. However,
the researcher will make every effort to select materials that will answer the research
questions and provide the end product of a written outline to educate fire personnel on
the NIMS and a listing of departmental documents that should be reviewed to
determine their compliance with the NIMS.

The author realizes that the Appendix B questionnaire distributed to the other
fire departments itself is a limited inquiry. A great deal of thought went into the
design of the questionnaire in order to be simple and straightforward. The author also
recognizes the demands upon the time of other Fire Chiefs and will be respectful in
developing a questionnaire that will take only a limited amount of their time to
complete. It is therefore recognized the limited population sample will be selected to
provide an educational outline for fire personnel and a departmental document review
outline for NIMS compliance.

Definition of Terms:

1. Standard Operating Procedures – A written statement of procedures
designed to standardize general activities, stating what shall and will be done
at a given activity.

2. General Order – A written, numbered directive that changes a department’s
rules, regulations, policies, or standard operating procedures. In most fire
departments, the Fire Chief issues general orders, as well as SOPs.

3. Chief of Department – The legal head of the Fire Department having the
authority over departmental operations.

4. Learning Resource Center – (LRC) Located in Emmitsburg, Maryland and is
the library for the National Fire Academy, Emergency Management Institute
and for other programs conducted at the Federal Emergency Management
Agency. With a collection of over 100,000 books magazines, and audiovisual
materials, the LRC facilitates and supports student and faculty research and curriculum development and design. For more information call 1-800-638-1821; or visit their web site at www.lrc.fema.gov.

5. Comparable Departments – This is a historical list of communities used by the Town of Wellesley Human Resources Board for comparison purposes during collective bargain negotiations.

6. Consolidated Dispatch Manual- is a set of documents that outline all aspects dispatching police and fire departments, with each department responsible for updating and setting their policy for the dispatch procedures.

Results

The results of this applied research project were compiled utilizing the questionnaire in Appendix B of the 13 comparable communities in Appendix C, personal communications with topic experts and review of related literature.

The research project questionnaire in Appendix B was distributed to 13 comparable communities. The questionnaire distribution represented: 100 percent of the comparable communities used by the Town of Wellesley and the Wellesley Firefighters Union during labor negotiations. The comparability is based upon population, financial means of the community and size of the departments. A total of 13 questionnaires were distributed and 13 departments responded. The distribution and responses equate to a rate of return of 100 percent. The raw data results are listed in Appendix D.

All responding departments indicated that no training on the topic of NIMS has occurred. All responding communities indicated that no plans have been made that outline the educational training necessary to implement NIMS. All responding
departments indicated that no plans have been made that outline the organizational documents, which may need revision to comply with NIMS. All responding departments have requested a copy of an outline that provides guidance on the necessary training and document revisions in order to comply with NIMS.

The results of the research question “What are the benefits to a community fire department in adopting NIMS?”, is that the adoption of NIMS results in a consistent nationwide standard for federal, state and local first responders to work more efficiently together. There are financial considerations in the adopting of NIMS as a community maintains eligibility for federal funding.

The results of the research question “What organizations provide guidance for the implementation and training of NIMS?”, is that many organizations provide information on the education and implementation of NIMS. FEMA’s EMI provides training on NIMS and ICS. State of Massachusetts’s agencies such as MEMA provides training for the development of trainers for all levels of ICS training.

The results of the research question “what are comparable Massachusetts fire departments programs for training their personnel on the topic on NIMS?”, is that no other departments from the 13 comparable communities group have provided any training on NIMS, or have considered a review of departmental documentation at the time of this research.

The result of the research question “what are the most feasible methods to educate firefighters on the topic of NIMS?”, is that the first course should be IS 700 which covers the introduction of NIMS. This IS 700 course can be taken online at each student’s pace, expect to be completed in 2-3 hours, a certificate is provided by EMI
upon completion. If ICS training is needed bring all members of the shift to the minimum level of IS 100, followed by more advanced training as necessary.

The results of the research question “What departmental documentation needs to be modified to support the integration of the NIMS into the department?”, is that dispatch manual must be revised to remove the various codes and signals used by the department and converting to the “plain language” as required by the NIMS. Review of Standard Operating Procedures to identify the language changes such as changing the assignment of an “information officer or press officer” to the NIMS term, “public information officer”. The Chief of Department should issue a General Order to officially begin the integration of NIMS.

Discussion

The general information that surrounded NIMS and the various opinions within the Wellesley Fire Department about NIMS generated the interest of the researcher. The researcher had heard general conversations ranging from NIMS being a new ICS to a repacked version of the current National Fire Academy ICS. This research was to provide a clear picture of what training is necessary for a local fire department and what documents must be reviewed for NIMS compliance.

The results of the questionnaire demonstrates that many departments have not introduced their personnel to the topic of NIMS and any impact it may have on the department training and operations. It is the opinion of this researcher that departments should keep current as possible and train their personnel as the NIMS material and requirements are released. All departments that participated in the questionnaire
indicated that a simple outline on the steps necessary to comply with NIMS would be a helpful tool to provide general guide to their departments.

The results of this research indicate there are several benefits for a local fire department to adopt NIMS. The primary benefit for the adoption of NIMS is clearly stated in the preface of (HSPD-5), the NIMS document represents a core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes to enable effective efficient and collaborative incident management at all levels. Homeland Security Secretary Ridge stated, the adoption of NIMS would result in a consistent nationwide approach for federal, state, and local emergency responders to work more efficiently together (Ridge, 2004). The researcher supports Molino’s statement “NIMS implementation is a local issue and one that transcends all levels of government. Personnel at all levels ... will ultimately execute and enhance systems that will collectively become an effective national incident management system” (2004, p. 32). The standardization provides the most significant benefit to the general public and to the responders of having a more coordinated response.

The financial incentive of NIMS is that a department may receive federal preparedness assistance. The federal government uses its power to influence the cooperation among all interested parties, by the requirement of adopting NIMS as a prerequisite for federal preparedness funds. The federal government has the ability to impose standardization and the state and local officials must do their part to increase a seamless efficient emergency management response.

The discussion with Chief Rooney was significant as the researcher wanted to conduct research that was current and necessary to the improvement of the department.
Chief Rooney provided his thoughts on which documents should be reviewed to comply with NIMS. The support that a presidential directive provided the effort to institute a National Incident Management System is very similar to the Fire Chief requiring department personnel to complete by the Chief requiring the training and any necessary changes within the fire department to integration of NIMS. Chief Rooney stated that whatever training is necessary to implement NIMS would be required of all fire department personnel.

There are several federal and state government agencies that provide information on NIMS. FEMA had the responsibility to produce the educational components of NIMS and get this system into practice at the local level. Under the direction of FEMA, the NIC will lead the effort to refine and maintain the NIMS. Under Secretary of Emergency Preparedness and Response stated, “… the establishment of the NIC allows for a mechanism to provide ongoing coordination among federal, state, local, and tribal incident management entities with emergency responders to coordinate our mission to better protect our citizens” (FEMA, 2004, p.1). The NIC accepts information and suggestion on the refinement of the NIMS from all the interested parties to provide the most up to date system.

The EMI independent study programs for ICS 100, ICS 200 and NIMS IS 700 were taken by researcher online and found both to be simple but informative. The IS 700 course covers the introduction of NIMS and takes about 2 to 3 hours to complete. The IS ICS 100 is an introductory ICS course and takes about 2 to 3 hours to complete. The IS ICS 200 course was more informative and took about two hours to complete.
The method of training programs online has worked efficiently for training the entire staff, as the Wellesley Fire Department completed the EMI course for Radiological Emergency Management in June 2004. All personnel were provided training time on computers with the downloaded course and allowed selected dates to transmit their final exam and registration information. The prior training approach for online training was successful and will be utilized for the NIMS/ICS.

Recommendation

The personnel in the local fire department will be safer with the integration of NIMS into their emergency response operations. NIMS will result in a nationwide standard for federal, state and local emergency responders to work in a more coordinated and efficient manner during an emergency. The researcher recommends utilizing the NIMS training outline in Appendix F and documents compliance outline in Appendix G. The researcher recommends the adoption of these outlines as a general guide to introduce NIMS to the local fire department and a general guide of departmental documents to review for NIMS compliance. The education program for NIMS should begin with the IS 700 followed by the appropriate level of ICS training as needed. The local fire department and other first responders will be safer due to the results of this research and will have a plan that can serve as a model to other comparable fire departments. Future researchers should consider contacting the Wellesley Fire Department to receive any updated information on our NIMS integration outline for the local fire departments as the NIMS is an evolving system and additional standards are anticipated.
February 27, 2004

Dear Fire Chief Smith,

I am enrolled in the National Fire Executive Fire Officer Program and currently writing a research paper on the topic of educating fire personnel on the National Incident Management System. This research will result in creation of an outline for an educational program for local fire departments to consider. This research will in the identification of the necessary departmental documents, which may need modification to comply with the implementation of NIMS. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in answering the attached questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Richard A. DeLorie
Appendix B

NIMS Questionnaire : Training / Documents

1. Has your department trained your personnel on the NIMS?
   Please check your answer  ______YES  ______NO

2. Does your department have a plan that outlines the educational training necessary to implement NIMS? If your answer is YES, please forward a copy to my attention.
   Please check your answer  ______YES  ______NO

3. Does your department have an outline that identifies the organizational documentation that need to be revised to comply with NIMS? If your answer is YES, please forward a copy to my attention.
   Please check your answer  ______YES  ______NO

4. If an outline was created that outlined the necessary training to educate the fire personnel on the NIMS, would you like a copy?
   Please check your answer  ______YES  ______NO

5. If an outline was created that outlined the departmental documentation that may need revision to comply with NIMS, would you like a copy?
   Please check your answer  ______YES  ______NO

If you answered YES to questions 4 and/or 5 please email me at rdelorie@ci.wellesley.ma.us to receive copies of these outlines, the results will be provided as soon as possible.
Appendix C

Town of Wellesley – List of Comparable Communities

Arlington
Belmont
Brookline
Concord
Dedham
Framingham
Lexington
Milton
Natick
Needham
Newton
Wayland
Winchester
Appendix D

Raw Data Results of Questionnaire

<table>
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<th>Respondents/Percentage</th>
<th>Departments reporting</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Has your department trained your personnel on the NIMS?
   - **YES** (0) 0%
   - **NO** (13) 100%

2. Does your department have a plan that outlines the educational training necessary to implement NIMS? If your answer is YES, please forward a copy to my attention.
   - **YES** (0) 0%
   - **NO** (13) 100%

3. Does your department have an outline that identifies the organizational documentation that need to be revised to comply with NIMS? If your answer is YES, please forward a copy to my attention.
   - **YES** (0) 0%
   - **NO** (13) 100%

4. If an outline was created that outlined the necessary training to educate the fire personnel on the NIMS, would you like a copy?
   - **YES** (13) 100%
   - **NO** (0) 0%

5. If an outline was created that outlined the departmental documentation that may need revision to comply with NIMS, would you like a copy?
   - **YES** (13) 100%
   - **NO** (0) 0%
Memorandum

To: Deputy DeLorie
Subject: NIMS Training Document Compliance Outline
Date: October 22, 2004

Please schedule the NIMS training and evaluate the need for ICS training/review. I agree that the prior EMI online course program was successful and should use the same approach for this program. I will issue a General Order for the adoption of NIMS; however we will need to discuss the changes to any documentation as issues are identified. Lastly, please provide a cost estimate for the “train the trainer” for the ICS courses.
Appendix F

NIMS Training Outline for Local Fire Department

1. Chief of Department should formally adopt the NIMS in a General Order or Departmental Notice. This set the direction of the department to integrate NIMS.

2. Chief of Department should order all personnel to complete the EMI IS 700 NIMS course, found at http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/crslist.asp, plan on three hours to complete, a certificate is awarded by EMI.

3. Chief of Department should order all personnel to complete a minimum level of IMC training beginning with IS 100 basic ICS, found at http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/crslist.asp, plan on three hours to complete, and a certificate is awarded by EMI.

Chief of Department should order all personnel to complete a minimum level of IMC training beginning with IS 200 basic ICS, found at http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/crslist.asp, plan on three hours to complete, and a certificate is awarded by EMI.
NIMS Training Outline for Local Fire Department

4. Chief of Department should contact the state fire academy and/or the state emergency management office regarding advanced ICS instructor training programs, this will enable on shift training programs at minimal financial impact.

5. Chief of Department should provide this outline to other emergency response personnel in their community to facilitate the integration of NIMS into the local emergency management response. The Local Emergency Management Committee (LEPC) should be included in the promotion on NIMS into the community emergency incident response.

6. Chief of Department needs to keep informed of any changes in the requirements of NIMS as these will continue to develop over time. Chiefs need to review any changes being considered and voice their opinion directly to the NIC or via their respective professional organizations.
Appendix G

NIMS Document Review Outline for Local Fire Department

1. The departmental documents to be considered for review depend upon the structure and operating systems of an individual department; however the first document reviewed or created should be one that identifies NIMS as the only emergency incident management system recognized by the department.

2. All General Orders, Notices, Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines, Training Manuals, Operations Manuals, and any documents that assist or guide an emergency response, need to be reviewed for NIMS compliance.
References


