

# FEMA Funding and NIMS Compliance

By Jamie Herman  
Training Specialist

There still seems to be a great deal of confusion regarding the FEMA requirements as they pertain to the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance schedule. Hopefully, this article will address some of those questions without creating more confusion.

I recall a conversation I had with Rob Swider, P.E., from the NYSDOH last year when he asked how I thought most operators were doing in complying with ICS requirements. I must have looked at him with a bewildered look, as he felt the need to further explain the issue. In my defense, the term ICS at that point, brought back memories from my youth. You see, I attended a catholic elementary school named the Immaculate Conception School (ICS). Let me tell you, I still have the bare knuckles to prove it!! Not that I ever did anything wrong mind you. However, following this discussion with Rob, I decided I had better start doing some research.

As a State Circuit Rider, I spent a great deal of my time working on security and emergency response issues, including working in conjunction with the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO). A very dedicated group, working with one common goal: our safety. I then completed ICS and NIMS compliance training.

## Overview

On March 5, 1996, Governor George Pataki signed Executive Order No. 26, establishing the National Interagency Incident Management System – Incident Command System as the State standard to be utilized during emergency operations. ICS resulted from problems identified while trying to manage rapidly moving wildfires in the 1970's. By way of the Homeland Security Presidential Directive No. 5, President Bush directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop the National Incident Management System. The Incident Command System and NIMS were created to provide a common language and command structure in which emergency responders from various disciplines could respond together to natural disasters, emergencies and acts of terrorism in a more efficient and organized manner. It built on previous response mechanisms, while trying to correct shortcomings of those operating systems. NIMS provides a unified approach to incident management and command, with emphasis on emergency response preparedness and recovery.

## Compliance

NIMS compliance is a requirement to receive federal emergency response and preparedness funding. All grant

funding dealing with disaster mitigation, preparedness and response require compliance. For our member systems and their operators, to be compliant with NIMS for fiscal year 2006 ALL employees should complete IS – 100.PW (Public Works), and IS - 700 (introduction to the National Incident Management System) no later than Sept. 30, 2006. If you have not completed this training, please do so as soon as possible. Managerial and supervisory positions should complete IS – 100.PW, IS – 200 (ICS for single resources and initial action incidents) and IS – 700, no later than Sept. 30, 2006.

Compliance with the fiscal year 2006 requirements allows you to apply for preparedness funding in fiscal year 2007. Your compliance assures that your system will be eligible for preparedness and remedial funding following a disaster.

Since ICS and NIMS success depends on training and participation by people such as yourselves, it is important that operators receive this training so you can function within an emergency situation and understand how to get your concerns and requirements addressed.

The following table may help to more fully illustrate the compliance schedule:

<u>AUDIENCE</u>	<u>REQUIRED TRAINING</u>
Firefighters	IS 700: intro to NIMS
Hospital staff	
Law enforcement personnel	ICS 100: intro to ICS or equivalent
Public health personnel	
Public works/utility personnel	
First line supervisors	IS 700: intro to NIMS
Field supervisors	IS 100: intro to ICS or equivalent
Emergency management personnel	IS 200: basic ICS or equivalent

It was recommended to me by a SEMO representative that all water and wastewater operators complete IS 100, IS 200, IS 700 and IS 800. I have taken this training and agree that each of these training levels are educational and could be helpful during an incident. Don't forget, each of you provide a very crucial role in securing and protecting the health of the public in your community. NIMS is an ever evolving emergency response mechanism, and as such is subject to change as new practices are developed. Therefore, the training and compliance schedule may also change as the system expands.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1) Who has to take the NIMS and ICS training?

All federal, state, local, tribal, private sector and non-governmental personnel with a direct role in emergency management and response. This includes all emergency services personnel such as EMS, hospitals, public health, fire service, law enforcement, public works/utilities and other emergency management response personnel.

2) Should elected officials take this training?

The NIMS Integration Center strongly recommends that all elected officials who could be interacting with multiple jurisdictions and agencies during an emergency, complete at least the minimum requirements.

## Training Information

ICS and NIMS training is available online and is also transferable to contact hours toward NYSDOH certification renewal. As I write this article I am unsure if NYSDEC will grant renewal credits for this training. We will check into that and update our web site with that information as it becomes available. As for water certification renewal, the following contact hours will be granted for each course:

- IS-100.PW = 1.5 Contact hours
- IS-200 = 3.0 Contact hours
- IS-700 = 1.5 Contact hours

These contact hours are redeemable by sending in each training completion certificate to:

Kristine Wheeler, P.E.  
 NYSDOH, Bureau of Water Supply Protection  
 Flanigan Square – 547 River St.  
 Troy, N.Y. 12180

To complete the training and compliance requirements online is fairly easy. You begin by completing your registration information. Then you will simply begin the first training level. The site will give you an approximate time of completion for each section. If you do not have time to complete the entire course at one time don't worry, you can save your work and return to complete the training at a later date. Each different section has its own course outline, but they all are educational and provide the basic terminology and structure to function within an emergency. Completion times vary depending on reading comprehension and computer skills, but none of the sessions are very long. At the end of each course there is a test of your knowledge. Once you successfully complete the test, a certificate will be provided. You will need to send this certificate to the contact previously listed, to be granted your certification renewal contact hours. The following is the link to register and begin training completion: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) then click *Government*, then click *Preparedness and Training*, then click *Training Resources for Emergency Managers and Personnel*, then click *FEMA Independent Study Program*, then click *option 1 – EMI learning*

*site*. The course outline will follow. After a brief registration, you will be allowed to begin.

## Conclusion

I know most operators feel overwhelmed with all the mandates and requirements being thrown at you daily. However, we must also keep up with the times, and the NIMS has been used effectively by emergency managers, law enforcement and emergency response professionals. We are the caretakers of a very precious commodity, and need to provide for its protection and safety accordingly. Remember, your compliance will not only better your system and community, but also provide you with 6.0 contact hours toward your certification renewal.

If you have any questions regarding these courses, please feel free to contact me at 1-888-697-8725 Ext 13 or email me at [Herman@nyruralwater.org](mailto:Herman@nyruralwater.org).

I would like to thank Kristine Wheeler, P.E., from the NYSDOH and Theodore Fisch, Region 1 Regional Director of the NYS State Emergency Management Office for their assistance in putting this article together.

More information on this topic can be found at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov), [www.Nimsonline.com](http://www.Nimsonline.com) and at the State Emergency Management Office website, [www.semo.state.ny.us](http://www.semo.state.ny.us). ♠