

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

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

The U.S. Departments of Education and Homeland Security offer numerous supports geared at building school and HEI 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 HEIs?

Both DHS and ED offer schools and HEIs 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 HEIs.

National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Integration Division

DHS created the NIC Incident Management Systems Integration Division to oversee the maintenance and refinement of NIMS and offer resources promoting its adoption. Administered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the NIC provides guidance and support for NIMS adoption and maintenance. The NIC is accessible at <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>.

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 HEIs 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 HEIs have to be NIMS compliant?

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

All K-12 schools and HEIs — 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 HEIs need to do in order to be compliant with NIMS?

Schools and HEIs should complete the prescribed activities as listed in the *NIMS Implementation Activities For Schools and Higher Education Institutions* and fully document their efforts towards achieving NIMS compliance. A checklist and detailed guidance are accessible at <http://rems.ed.gov>.

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 guidance that outlines the content and objectives for acceptable NIMS training materials. 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. The sponsoring organization must also verify the qualifications of the instructors based on the guidance provided by the NIC. Certificates of course completion are also the responsibility of the sponsoring agency or organization.

2. On-line, Independent Study

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its training branch, the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), offer numerous online, independent study courses that are free and include certificates of completion. EMI offers the ICS- 100, 200, 700, and 800.B courses online as Independent Study (IS) courses at <http://training.fema.gov>.

3. State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agencies

Local or State Emergency Management Agencies offer training in a classroom setting. School emergency management officials should contact their partners for course schedules and logistics.

6. How do we determine "key personnel"?

The U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and Education recommend all "key personnel" take at least some of the NIMS training courses. *Key personnel* is defined as any individuals that would be involved in the response and incident command structure during an incident or event. Because every school, district, and HEI is unique and works from different operations and management structures, *key personnel* will vary from education community to community. Therefore, schools and HEI emergency management teams should use their discretion to identify *key personnel* at each of their sites.

7. What courses are required to be compliant with NIMS?

Currently, *key personnel* are required to complete four primary courses in order for an individual or organization to be considered NIMS compliant. To date, the following courses are required:

- **ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System**
- **ICS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents**
- **ICS-700: NIMS, An Introduction**
- **ICS-800.B: National Response Framework, An Introduction**

NOTE:

1. Completion of course *IS-100.SC Introduction to the Incident Command System, I-100, for Schools*, constitutes completion of course ICS-100. This course was specifically designed to provide ICS training within a K-12 school-based context.

2. *ICS-800.B National Response Framework* is new and replaces the previously existing ICS-800, National Response Plan training. If personnel have completed the previous version, *ICS-800*, they do not need to take the replacement course in order to be considered compliant. However, it is recommended they complete the updated course in order to have the same information as their partners.

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

The school or campus emergency management team should determine the *key personnel* who should receive NIMS training based on their roles in the overall school or HEI emergency management program. Schools and HEIs should identify three groups of people: 1) Personnel with any role or responsibility in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response; and 2) Emergency management personnel with a critical role in response; and, 3) Emergency Management personnel with leadership role in emergency response who would be obligated (required) to command and manage an incident in the absence of traditional incident response personnel.

Emergency management personnel with a critical role in response could include the Incident Commander, member of the Command Staff, member of the General Staff, or member of another key campus emergency management team such as a branch, division, unit, or strike team members. Command staff generally refers to any staff that serves in the role of incident commander, public information officer, safety officer, or liaison officer. General staff includes any staff that serves on the operations, planning, logistics, or finance/administration branches of the Incident Command System.

For more information on required and recommended NIMS training for various education personnel, please refer to “Key Personnel and NIMS Training for Schools and Higher Education Institutions.”

9. 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. 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.

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

NIMS implementation is self-assessed. Each school, district, or HEI 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.

