

Supplemental Information: SEMS, NIMS and ICS

Introduction

The federal government recognizes the need for communication, coordination, and cooperation among emergency management stakeholders in States. Public Safety agencies across the country have well-established plans and agreements in place that help to better respond to emergencies.

As a result of the East Bay Hills Fire of 1991, California State Senator Nicolas Petris introduced SB 1841. Subsequently, the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) was adopted by California in 1993. On February 28, 2003, President George W. Bush released Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 directing the Secretary to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS/SEMS provides a clear and consistent organizational structure for agencies involved in responding to emergencies. Often, many different agencies must work together effectively to protect lives, property and the environment, during disasters. SEMS facilitates priority setting, interagency cooperation, and the efficient flow of resources and information.

SEMS is organized into five levels including State, Regional, Operational Area, Local, and Field. Every incident begins at the field level. Some incidents can be managed by local agencies without needing additional resources. In situations where the local government resources have been exhausted, SEMS facilitates coordination between the local government, the operational area, the region, and finally the state to ensure that the local government is being properly supported with the resources it needs.

Under SEMS, each level of government operates an emergency operations center which serves as the central coordinating point for communications, resource requests, and information sharing among the five levels. At the state level, this is called the State Operations Center (SOC).

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

NIMS is intended to standardize response to emergencies involving multiple jurisdictions or multiple agencies. NIMS is intended to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of all emergency responders in California. NIMS require emergency response agencies to use basic principles and components of emergency management including the Incident Command System (ICS), multi-agency or inter-agency coordination, the Operational Area Concept, and established mutual aid systems.

Incident Command System (ICS)

ICS is a field-level emergency response system that is designed to enable effective and efficient incident management by integrating facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. ICS provides a foundation for NIMS. It was originally developed by the

California fire service for managing emergency response to wildland fires. Under NIMS, the State Operational Center (SOC) organizational structure reflects basic Incident Command System (ICS) functions. However, ICS is a field-based tactical communications system, whereas NIMS provides a system for managing the event at the local, operational area, region and state levels.

At the field level, ICS establishes a unified command under an incident commander who is chosen from the agency with primary functional and/or jurisdictional authority over response to the event. Often, more than one agency will have jurisdictional authority over the response to an event. Creating a Unified Command under one agency helps eliminate duplication of effort and promotes efficiency of response.

Multi-agency and Inter-agency Coordination

A primary aspect of NIMS regulation is the need to use multi-agency or inter-agency coordination at all NIMS levels. Its purpose is to cause diverse organizations to work together and communicate with each other in a coordinated effort to facilitate decisions for overall emergency response activities and sharing of critical resources and prioritization of incidents.

Multi-agency coordination implies multiple agencies within a single area of jurisdiction, or a discipline (such as between all agencies within a city or a county such as departments.).

Inter-agency coordination implies between disciplines, between different jurisdictions or between different political levels, such as between local police department, county sheriff, and state police.

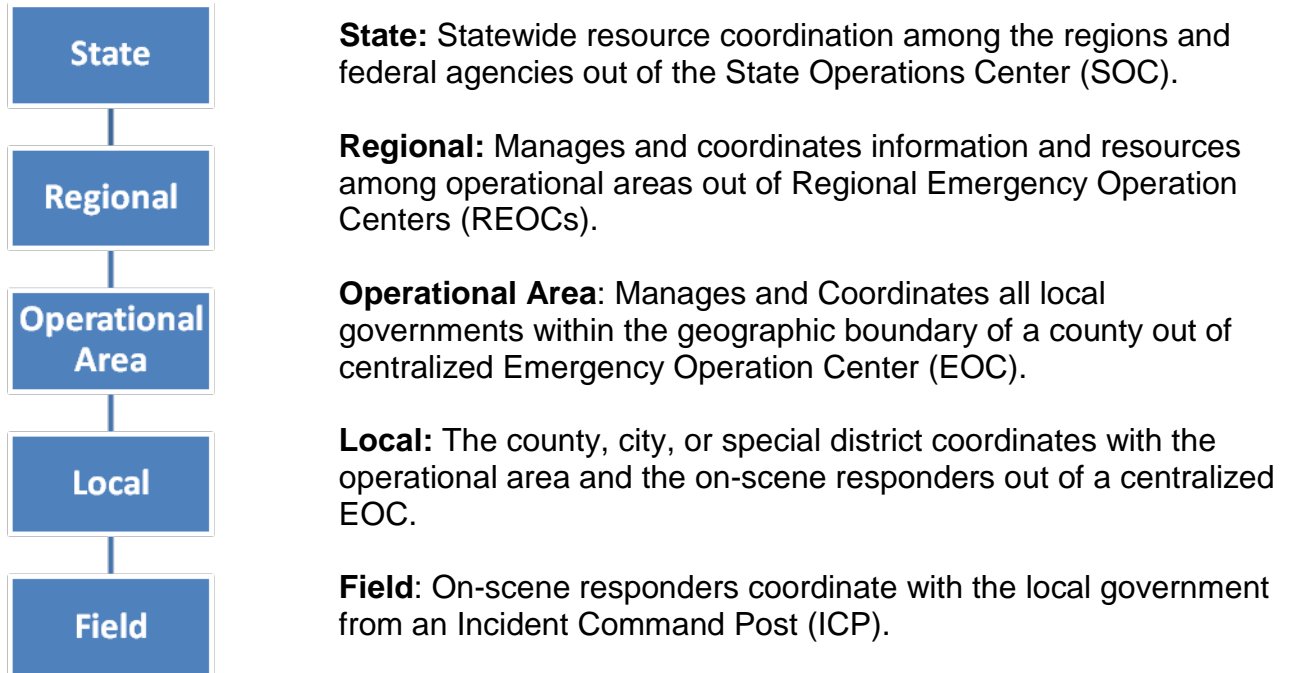
The Multi-Agency Coordination System or MACS is a part of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS). It is also an integral part of the MACS process, essential to integrating and coordinating multiagency emergency response and management.

Mutual Aid

Mutual aid is the voluntary provision of services and facilities by agencies or organizations to assist each other when existing resources prove to be inadequate. It is neighbor (government to government) helping neighbor when there is a need for additional resources, people, equipment, etc. For firefighting it includes fire responders and their equipment. For law enforcement it includes people and equipment for law enforcement. For the field of communications it includes people and equipment for most types of communications.

NIMS Organizational Structure

Consists of five organizational levels which are activated as necessary:



NIMS Organizational Functions

At each organizational level, NIMS is organized into five primary functions: Management, Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. Under NIMS, only those functional elements that are needed are activated at the SOC. Duties of functions not activated will be performed by the next highest level in the organization. Activation of functions will be determined by the SOC Director. Each of the four subordinate functions has a section chief who reports to the SOC Management.

The needs posed by the incident will define the organizational elements required to perform the functions needed. While it is desirable to have organizational consistency between the SOC, REOC and other NIMS levels, the primary organizational consideration should be centered on functional need. All functions must be capable of being represented in the SOC. However, there is no requirement that all functional positions be activated.

The SOC is responsible for serving as the central command point for any statewide emergency response. It also serves as the coordination point for initiating requests for federal assistance. Actions of the SOC may include:

- Establishing communication links and networks with the Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC), Federal Regional Operations Center (ROC), Joint Information Center (JIC) and Local Assistance Center (LAC);
- Coordinating information with the REOCs, Governor's Office, key State/Federal Agencies, local Government(s), other states (if applicable) and private sector and non-governmental organization partners;
- Direct efforts toward preservation of life, property, environment, animals and minimization of human suffering;
- Assisting with the identification of immediate mitigation efforts in order to reduce the impacts of the occurring incident;
- Assuring the continuation of essential governmental services;
- Coordinating state mutual aid and facilitating federal aid and financial assistance;
- Preparing and coordinating public information and press releases; and
- Providing disaster situation assessments.

State Operations Center (SOC) Coordination with the Regional Emergency Operations Center REOC

The level of coordination required with the REOC is determined by various factors including: the type of emergency, the ability of the REOC to perform assigned functions, and the level of required interaction between the REOC and the SOC.

SOC Coordination with the Federal Government

The ESFs provide the structure for coordinating Federal interagency support for a Federal response to an incident. They are mechanisms for grouping functions most frequently used to provide Federal support to States and Federal-to-Federal support, both for declared disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act and for non-Stafford Act incidents.

The Incident Command System provides for the flexibility to assign ESF and other stakeholder resources according to their capabilities, tasking, and requirements to augment and support the other sections of the Joint Field Office (JFO)/Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) or National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) in order to respond to incidents in a more collaborative and cross-cutting manner.

While ESFs are typically assigned to a specific section at the NRCC or in the JFO/RRCC for management purposes, resources may be assigned anywhere within the Unified Coordination structure. Regardless of the section in which an ESF may reside, that entity works in conjunction with other JFO sections to ensure that appropriate planning and execution of missions occur. Additional information on ESF's can be found at www.fema.gov.

ESF #1 – Transportation
ESF #2 – Communications
ESF #3 – Public Works and Engineering
ESF #4 – Firefighting
ESF #5 – Emergency Management
ESF #6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services
ESF #7 – Logistics Management and Resource Support
ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services
ESF #9 – Search and Rescue
ESF #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response
ESF #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources
ESF #12 – Energy
ESF #13 – Public Safety and Security
ESF #14 – Long-Term Community Recovery
ESF #15 – External Affairs

If federal resources are determined to be necessary, the SOC will request that FEMA provide a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) or other federal representative with the authority to approve requests for federal assistance. The FCO or other representative will respond to the SOC.

FEMA and the ESFs will provide assistance in accordance with the National Response Framework, the Catastrophic Incident Base Plan Concept of Operations and a Presidential Declaration of an emergency or major disaster.

The REOC functions as the central point of coordination for state and federal assistance within the region. The Regional Administrator or SOC Director will coordinate with the FEMA Region to request, through the SOC, ESF personnel in the REOC and requests for assistance. Once ESF representation is established at the REOC, the REOC will then act as a joint state-federal point of coordination for all response activities within the affected region. FEMA and State will conduct joint action planning meetings in accordance with the established operational periods. Federal ESF staff in the REOC(s) will operate as Federal Agency Representatives.

SOC Coordination with Other States

States use the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) as its primary authority for requesting resources from other states. The EMAC provides a formal structure for sending resources to and receiving resources from other states. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are EMAC members.

During an activation of the SOC, the SOC Director has the authority to request an Advance Team to coordinate all EMAC resources.