

**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

3650 SCHRIEVER AVENUE MATHER, CALIFORNIA 95655  
PHONE: (916) 845-8510 FAX: (916) 845-8511

**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

STATE CAPITOL SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814  
PHONE: (916) 324-8908 FAX: (916) 323-9633

July 28, 2005

Ms. Georgianna Armstrong  
Emergency Services Manager  
Kern County  
5642 Victor Street  
Bakersfield, California 93308

Dear Ms. Armstrong:

**SUBJECT: LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL INCIDENT  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS)**

This is in response to your July 8, 2005, letter requesting clarification of NIMS implementation for local governments. Both the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security (OHS) fully support your efforts to build and improve your capability to overcome the effects of disaster or acts of terrorism. Our agencies are working together to assist you in this effort, in part, by providing consistent and reliable information and by administering federal preparedness funding to this end. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with the following information in response to the points noted in your letter.

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services is responsible for ensuring and supporting statewide compliance with the NIMS requirements established by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Office of Homeland Security is responsible for administering and supporting the DHS federal preparedness grants as the State Administering Agency. In response to your request that staff from each of our agencies attend the July 28, 2005 Mutual Aid Regional Advisory Committee (MARAC) meeting, we designated senior staff to attend who spoke on behalf of our respective functions.

Regarding your question related to NIMS compliance and Homeland Security grant funding, we understand the need for accurate and consistent information. The enclosed DHS letter to Governors dated September 8, 2004, details the specific FY 2005 (federal fiscal year) NIMS requirements that states must implement. Please note that there are no FY 2005 NIMS compliance requirements for local governments. The FY 2005 requirements for states and territories are listed below:

- Incorporating NIMS into existing training programs and exercises
- Ensuring that federal preparedness funding, including DHS Homeland Security Grant Program, Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), supports NIMS

implementation at the state and local levels (in accordance with the eligibility and allowable uses of the grants)

- Incorporating NIMS into Emergency Operations Plans (EOP)
- Promotion of intrastate mutual aid agreements
- Coordinating and providing technical assistance to local entities regarding NIMS
- Institutionalizing the use of the Incident Command System (ICS)

The DHS letter also outlines those other actions that state, tribal, and local entities are encouraged or “should” take to support NIMS implementation; however, the federal government has not released its guidance for FY 2006 detailing the requirements for “full” NIMS compliance.

The NIMS Integration Center (NIC), the agency charged to oversee all aspects of NIMS, has provided the following updates. NIMS implementation guidance is forthcoming that will address specific FY 2006 requirements across the entire spectrum of NIMS. We understand that the guidance will address, in part, a NIMS-compliant Emergency Operations Plan, formal recognition and adoption of NIMS, and training courses to be taken in FY 2006. OES will regularly provide written guidance and direction specific to California to assist you in NIMS implementation activities and compliance.

As to your question on the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Technical Group, OES has activated the SEMS Maintenance System to assist in meeting the requirements of NIMS, integrating SEMS and NIMS as directed by the Governor’s Executive Order S-02-05 (attached). This has resulted in the creation of Specialist Committees to focus on developing implementation strategies and materials focused on specific NIMS compliance requirements. Materials developed should assist all California jurisdictions in meeting full compliance requirements by the October 2006 deadline (beginning of FY 2007).

Regarding the NIMS online course, there are no NIMS training requirements for FY 2005; however, the federal government is encouraging completion of the NIMS Awareness Course - IS 700. The NIC suggests all emergency personnel with a direct role in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response to take this course. In recent discussion with the NIC, they anticipate IS 700 being a requirement for NIMS compliance for FY 2006.

One tool to assist in establishing a NIMS baseline is the use of NIMCAST. This is a Web-based self-assessment system that will allow users to assess their preparedness and response capabilities and NIMS compliance status. California’s official baseline assessment will include our 58 counties, nine UASI cities and Fresno, certain key state agencies with primary lead/support roles in the *State Emergency Plan*, and those federally recognized tribal governments that choose to participate. OES anticipates initiating the official NIMCAST process in FY 2005, which ends September 30, 2005.

Apart from the state’s baseline assessment, responder and emergency organizations at all jurisdictional levels and disciplines, as well as private sector and voluntary groups, may establish an individual NIMCAST account for their own use and work through topics and questions associated with all of the primary NIMS categories. The account is established for use by that individual organization only. Information entered concerning their organization will not be

Ms. Georgianna Armstrong  
July 28, 2005  
Page Three

viewable by anyone else, nor will it be included in the state's NIMCAST roll-up. The NIMCAST website is: [www.fema.gov/nimcast](http://www.fema.gov/nimcast).

In closing, please be assured that our agencies are coordinating program efforts to ensure that all jurisdictions can improve their emergency management capability through SEMS/NIMS integration and through the provision of funding to support the overall emergency management capability of California.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact the OES Inland Regional Administrator, Charles Wynne, at (916) 845-8470 or by email: [Charles.Wynne@oes.ca.gov](mailto:Charles.Wynne@oes.ca.gov). For Homeland Security grant questions, please contact Mr. Brian Keith of the Office of Homeland Security at (916) 324-8908 or by email at: [Brian.Keith@ohs.ca.gov](mailto:Brian.Keith@ohs.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
HENRY R. RENTERIA  
Director  
Governor's Office of Emergency Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
MATTHEW R. BETTENHAUSEN  
Director  
Governor's Office of Homeland  
Security

Enclosures

c: Paul Jacks, OES Deputy Director  
Brian Keith, OHS Deputy Director  
Charles Wynne, OES Inland Regional Administrator