



STATE OF VERMONT  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
HOMELAND SECURITY UNIT  
MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Vermont First Responder Community, Public Officials

**FROM:** Captain Chris Reinfurt, Director Vermont Homeland Security Unit

**DATE:** March 29, 2005

**SUBJECT:** NIMS Statewide Strategy

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As the newly appointed Director of the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, it is my task to work with you on implementing the National Incident Management System. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private sector and non-governmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents. The NIMS is a system designed for all disciplines to use in preparation for and responding to all hazards.

The President of the United States has issued Homeland Security Directives (HSPD 5 and 8) that directly impact the states and local jurisdictions. These directives mandate that the states and localities meet certain criteria as a condition of receiving future funding from the Department of Homeland Security. These criteria will begin to be included in the upcoming awards for FY05. In Vermont, the Department of Public Safety, Homeland Security Unit is the State Administrative Agency (SAA) and is responsible for implementing these two directives through the administration of the Homeland Security Grant Program. The Vermont Homeland Security Unit is committed to the “all discipline/all hazard” approach to teaching Incident Command System. It is imperative that the Working Group develop a comprehensive ICS Curriculum for all First Responders.

Vermont has used several DHS acceptable Incident Command Systems for many years. In the fire service community, NFA approved ICS has been taught for over twenty years to our fire fighters and associated first responders. This ICS has been institutionalized into the emergency plans and operations of our fire service community. Additionally, our law enforcement community and other first responder organizations have received NIMS ICS training for the past six years. These two ICS curriculums form the baseline for Vermont’s First Responders.

The Vermont Homeland Security Unit will comply with the Federal (HSPD-5) by adopting the National Incident Management System. A working group of First Responders met on March 25 to determine Vermont’s strategy in implementing NIMS. As a result of this meeting the Vermont Homeland Security Unit recommends the following steps be taken by the State and locally for initial implementation of (HSPD 5 and 8) for compliance in 2005:

- Complete NIMS Awareness Independent Study Course IS 700
  - The Working Group has recommended that all first responders take the web based IS 700 course to introduce them to NIMS and to use the course as a “bridge” course to changes made from previous ICS courses attended. The hyper link to the course is:

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>. This independent study course developed by EMI explains the purpose, principles, key components and benefits of NIMS.

- The Working Group has recommended that those Regional Planning Commissions and Local Emergency Planning Committees that can assist with “facilitating” the IS 700 course for local entities to do so. To do so, RPC and LEPC personnel must successfully complete the IS 700 course and should have some background in one of the two accepted ICS curriculums.
    - Instructions are available to help you facilitate group study ~~it~~ on this web page. Should you have any questions please contact Kevin Keiger at [kgeiger@trorc.org](mailto:kgeiger@trorc.org) who is the Working Group’s point of contact for RPCs and LEPCs on this initiative.
  - It is requested that local town leaders, road crews and emergency planners also be targeted for these outreach programs for IS 700.
- Formally recognize NIMS through executive order
- This is being accomplished through an Executive Order from the Governor.
- Establish NIMS Baseline
- The Working Group has agreed that the current level of ICS training that has been conducted in the First Responder Community shall be our “baseline”.
  - From this baseline the Working Group will be making recommendations later this spring as to what Vermont’s strategy will be for implementing an ICS Curriculum.
  - In the interim, all Firescope and NIIMS ICS Courses may continue to be taught under the following conditions:
    - Taught by a “State” certified instructor
    - Instructor must make changes to presentation to be compliant with NIMS
    - Must have successfully completed IS 700
    - **IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT YOUR RESPECTIVE DISCIPLINES’ TRAINING ACADEMY OR AGENCY**
- Institutionalize the use of NIMS and ICS
- The Working Group recommends that all First Responders incorporate NIMS into existing training and exercise programs
  - Incorporate NIMS principles, policies, and terminology into Emergency Operations Plans
  - Promote intrastate mutual aid agreements for sharing resources within the First Responder Community

While this initial plan addresses a strategy for implementing NIMS, it is a work in progress. The Working Group is committed to finalizing the strategy over the next several months and to inform the First Responder Community of the State Strategy. The Working Group reminds all First Responders that the NIMS encompasses much more than just the ICS component. It also provides a foundation for training, preparedness efforts, communications and information sharing, and ordering resources. These other components of NIMS require additional development to enable Vermont to be compliant, and work is currently being accomplished by other committees to comply with the DHS mandate.

Should you have any questions about NIMS please feel free to contact me by e-mail at the above address. Thank you for your continued support.