

THE NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

On February 28, 2003, the President issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5, Management of Domestic Incidents. This directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer a **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**. The **NIMS** provides a consistent nationwide template to enable federal, state and local governments, as well as private sector and non-government organizations to work together effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity, including acts of catastrophic terrorism.

NIMS is built on the foundation provided by existing incident management and emergency response systems used by jurisdictions and functional disciplines at all levels. **NIMS** integrates the best practices that have proven effective over the years into a comprehensive nationwide framework for use by incident management organizations from an "all hazard" perspective (natural and manmade disasters, terrorist attacks, and other emergencies). It also includes programs to produce new technologies and new approaches that will enable continuous refinement of **NIMS** in the future.

The **NIMS** represents a core set of concepts, principles, terminology and organizational processes to enable effective, efficient and collaborative incident management at all levels. To ensure that this concept is a common and universal framework at the federal level, the Secretary of Homeland Security is directed to develop a **National Response Plan (NRP)** that integrates all federal government domestic prevention, preparedness, response and recovery plans into a single, all-discipline, all-hazard plan.

HSPD-5 requires all federal departments and agencies to adopt the **NIMS** and use it in their individual domestic incident management and emergency prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation programs and activities, as well as in support of all actions taken to support state and local entities. The directive also requires federal departments and agencies to make adoption of the **NIMS** by state and local organizations a condition for federal preparedness assistance (through grants, contracts, and other activities) beginning in federal fiscal year 2005.

Jurisdictional compliance with certain aspects of the **NIMS** will be possible in the short term, such as adopting the basic tenets of the **Incident Command System (ICS)** identified as the foundation of the **NIMS**. Stanislaus County and the nine cities within the county have adopted the **ICS** and have been using it, throughout all disciplines, as the basic system of emergency management on a day-to-day basis.

Other aspects of the **NIMS**, however, will require additional development and refinement to enable compliance at a future date. The **NIMS Integration Center (NIC)** publishes additional standards, guidelines, and compliance protocols for the aspects of the **NIMS** not yet fully developed.

[Summary of local efforts that are being made to achieve compliance with NIMS.](#)