

Lesson 7: Communications, Information Management, and Supporting Technology

Lesson Overview

Effective communications, information management, and supporting technology are critical aspects of domestic incident management. This lesson will cover the ways in which NIMS supports these areas. At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the advantages of common communication and information management standards.
- Explain how NIMS will influence technology and technological systems required for emergency response.
- Describe the purpose of the NIMS Integration Center.

Concepts and Principles

NIMS standards for communications, information management, and supporting technology are based on several concepts and principles. These concepts and principles are described on the following screens.

Communications and Information Management Principles

Communications and information management under NIMS are based on the following concepts and principles:

- **A common operating picture that is accessible across jurisdictions and agencies is necessary.** A common operating picture helps to ensure consistency at all levels, among all who respond to or manage incident response.
- **Common communications and data standards are fundamental.** Effective communications, both within and outside the incident response structure, are enhanced by adherence to standards.

Principles of Supporting Technologies

NIMS will leverage science and technology to improve capabilities at a lower cost. To accomplish this, NIMS will base its supporting technology standards on five key principles:

1. **Interoperability and compatibility.** Systems must be able to work together.
2. **Technology support.** All organizations using NIMS will be able to enhance all aspects of incident management and emergency response.
3. **Technology standards.** National standards will facilitate interoperability and compatibility of major systems.
4. **Broad-based requirements.** NIMS provides a mechanism for aggregating and prioritizing new technologies, procedures, protocols, and standards.
5. **Strategic planning and R&D.** The NIMS Integration Center will coordinate with DHS to create a national R&D agenda.

Managing Communications and Information

NIMS communications and information systems enable the essential functions needed to provide a common operating picture and interoperability for:

- Incident management communications.
- Information management.
- Interoperability standards.

The NIMS Integration Center will also develop a national database for incident reports.