

Yellowstone County



EMERGENCY & GENERAL SERVICES

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Distinguished Council Members, Mayor, and Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the National Incident Management System (NIMS). I would like to give you a little history and information about NIMS and your role as elected leaders in this system and my responsibility as the Emergency Management Director and the local NIMS coordinator. I am also asking the Council to make a choice of three separate dates, September 27th, October 4th, or October 18th from 1730-2130 in order to attend training on NIMS so that we get closer to being fully NIMS compliant in our community.

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) guides all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from incidents. NIMS provides stakeholders across the whole community with the shared vocabulary, systems and processes to successfully deliver the capabilities described in the National Preparedness System. NIMS defines operational systems that guide how personnel work together during incidents.

The following are some NIMS frequently asked questions that may better help you understand what NIMS is and why it is important for you to be familiar with this federally required program.

What is the National Incident Management System (NIMS)?

- NIMS is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. It is intended to:
 - Be applicable across a full spectrum of potential incidents, hazards, and impacts, regardless of size, location or complexity.
 - Improve coordination and cooperation between public and private entities in a variety of incident management activities.
 - Provide a common standard for overall incident management.

Why do we need NIMS?

- NIMS provides a consistent nationwide framework and approach to enable government at all levels (Federal, State, tribal, and local), the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to work together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents regardless of the incident's cause, size, location, or complexity.
- Consistent application of NIMS lays the groundwork for efficient and effective responses, from a single agency fire response to a multiagency, multijurisdictional natural disaster or terrorism response. Entities that have integrated NIMS into their planning and incident management structure can arrive at an incident with little notice and still

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understand the procedures and protocols governing the response, as well as the expectations for equipment and personnel.

- NIMS provides commonality in preparedness and response efforts that allow diverse entities to readily integrate and, if necessary, establish unified command during an incident.

What are the Components of NIMS?

- NIMS Components link together and work in unison to form a comprehensive incident management system. NIMS Components include:
 - Preparedness
 - Communications and Information Management
 - Resource Management
 - Command and Management
 - Ongoing Management and Maintenance

To whom does NIMS apply?

- NIMS is applicable to State, tribal and local governments, private sector organizations, critical infrastructure owners and operators, nongovernmental organizations and other organizations with an active role in emergency management and incident response.
- Elected and appointed officials, who are responsible for jurisdictional policy decisions, must also have a clear understanding of their emergency management roles and responsibilities to better serve their constituency.

How does NIMS relate to local incident command?

- A basic premise of NIMS is that all incidents begin and end locally.
- NIMS does not take command away from State and local authorities. NIMS simply provides the framework to enhance the ability of responders, including the private sector and NGOs, to work together more effectively.
- The Federal Government supports State and local authorities when their resources are overwhelmed or anticipated to be overwhelmed.
 - Federal departments and agencies respect the sovereignty and responsibilities of local, tribal, and State governments while rendering assistance.
 - The intention of the Federal Government in these situations is not to command the response, but rather to support the affected local, tribal, and/or State governments.

What is the role of Elected and Appointed Officials during an incident?

- Elected and appointed officials are responsible for ensuring the public safety and welfare of the people of that jurisdiction.
- Specifically, these officials provide strategic guidance and resources during preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

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- Elected or appointed officials must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for successful emergency management and response.
- At times, these roles may require providing direction and guidance to constituents during an incident, but their day-to-day activities do not focus on emergency management and response.
 - Their awareness of NIMS is critical to ensuring cooperative response efforts and minimizing the incident impacts.

Thank you,

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