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August 3, 2005

To: Interested Parties

**SUBJECT: SEMS/NIMS INTEGRATION UPDATE**

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) is committed to providing you with up-to-date information and guidance regarding compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Our goal is to keep you informed of NIMS compliance issues, provide you with policy guidance and materials, and assist you in your efforts to achieve NIMS compliance. Moreover, because we recognize that there could be significant work efforts related to NIMS compliance, it is critical that the information and guidance we provide you meets California's needs and recognizes federal government requirements.

California has made significant progress to date and, through our Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Maintenance System, is initiating those actions we need to take individually and collectively to demonstrate NIMS compliance by the end of federal fiscal year (FY) 2006. NIMS compliance is a condition for receiving FY 2007 federal preparedness grants.

For purposes of SEMS/NIMS integration, we are measuring NIMS compliance against those requirements set forth in the official policy letter to Governors from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) dated September 8, 2004. The DHS letter listed the minimum NIMS requirements to be accomplished by states in FY 2005. There are no NIMS requirements for local government in FY 2005; however, DHS does encourage state, local, and tribal governments to support NIMS implementation by initiating those activities as listed in the letter.

Based upon these NIMS requirements, we have enclosed several documents that have been developed to provide you with more detail on: 1) the approach the State is taking to address NIMS compliance overall, 2) information on NIMS compliance and training, and 3) some suggested actions you can take now to support NIMS compliance (please see enclosures 1-3).

In addition, we have received updated information from the NIMS Integration Center (NIC), the agency charged to oversee all aspects of NIMS. They have informed us that 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 you undertake activities to achieve NIMS compliance, you will find that there are a number of contractors offering to provide training, consultative, or other NIMS-related services,

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stating that they are NIMS certified. We encourage you to use due diligence when choosing contractors and to examine their credentials. OES serves as the designated agency in California, in coordination with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security. OES is responsible for statewide NIMS compliance and implementation and should be considered the State's official resource for NIMS compliance requirements.

California's Standardized Emergency Management System provides a structured framework for responding to and managing emergencies and disasters of all kinds. California paved the way for the rest of the nation with SEMS and for nearly a decade we have used the system successfully. Through the SEMS Maintenance System, we can continue to incorporate lessons learned and enhance SEMS to further address NIMS compliance.

I believe California has the most comprehensive emergency management system in the nation. You should be proud of the system you helped create.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

HENRY R. RENTERIA  
Director

Enclosures:

- 1: SEMS/NIMS Integration Status
- 2: NIMS Compliance – Training
3. NIMS - Actions You Can Take Now

## SEMS/NIMS Integration Status

### August 3, 2005

**Background** This document provides an overview of California's SEMS/NIMS integration status relative to NIMS requirements set forth in the official policy letter to Governors from the Department of Homeland Security dated September 8, 2004.

FY 2005* Requirements for States and Territories	
1	Institutionalizing the use of the Incident Command System (ICS).
2	Incorporating NIMS into existing training and exercises.
3	Ensuring that Federal preparedness funding (including DHS Homeland Security Grant Program, Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funds) support NIMS implementation at the state and local levels (in accordance with the eligibility and allowable use of the grants).
4	Incorporating NIMS into Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs).
5	Promotion of intrastate mutual aid agreements.
6	Coordinating and providing technical assistance to local entities regarding NIMS.
State, Local, and Tribal Levels Should Support NIMS Implementation by Initiating the Following Activities	
7	Formally recognizing the NIMS and adopting the NIMS principles and policies.
8	Establish a NIMS baseline by determining which NIMS requirements you already meet.
9	Establish a timeframe and develop a strategy for full NIMS implementation.
10	Completing the NIMS Awareness Course: "National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction" (IS 700).
11	Institutionalize the use of the ICS.

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\* NOTE: FY 2005 through 2007 references are to federal fiscal years as follows:

FY 2005: October 1, 2004 – September 30, 2005

FY 2006: October 1, 2005 – September 30, 2006

FY 2007: October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007

## NIMS ACTIVITIES

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- 1. Institutionalizing the use of the Incident Command System (ICS).**

The State as a whole meets this requirement since ICS is a foundational element of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and is practiced by emergency management disciplines on a day-to-day basis. ICS, which provides a critical component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), is a foundational element of SEMS. In 1996 state law mandated the use of SEMS for state government; local government has institutionalized ICS into their operations as a part of SEMS, which provides continuity and consistency in our response system.
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- 2. Incorporating NIMS into existing training and exercises.**

The NIMS Integration Center (NIC) oversees NIMS training compliance requirements. The criteria used by the NIC to determine NIMS-compliant training are ICS objectives in the NIMS National Standard Training Guidance which can be found at the NIMS homepage at [www.fema.gov/nims](http://www.fema.gov/nims). The NIC has specifically identified CA FIRESCOPE Incident Command System (ICS) courses as being equivalent to the NIMS Incident Command System, and therefore, NIMS compliant. California's SEMS Approved Course of Instruction (ACI) field courses are based on FIRESCOPE ICS, incorporate those objectives, and are NIMS-compliant.

Our work will continue to develop standardized curriculum designed to enhance the current SEMS ACI. The SEMS Technical Group Specialist Committees will review and develop training and exercise implementation plans to fully address this requirement. Many efforts are underway to incorporate NIMS into existing training and exercises to meet the NIMS requirements by FY 2007. Examples include:

- The SEMS Training and Exercises Specialist Committee is developing training modules to assist in the enhancement of the SEMS ACI and integration of NIMS.
  - The exploration of private/public partnerships for course development using various training delivery methods.
  - The compilation of lists of training resources that have incorporated NIMS into their training modules.
  - The SEMS Training and Exercises Specialist Committee will be developing modular NIMS-focused training curricula designed to enhance the SEMS ACI. This process will be ongoing to incorporate the continuously developing requirements for NIMS compliance from the Federal government.
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- The NIMS-focused curriculum will include a Train-the-Trainer course to facilitate efficient, timely delivery of the NIMS material.
  - OES will establish a schedule/calendar of training activities for both internal and external training courses.
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**3. Ensuring that Federal preparedness funding (including DHS Homeland Security Grant Program, Urban Area Security Initiative [UASI] funds) support NIMS implementation at the state and local levels (in accordance with the eligibility and allowable use of the grants).**

The Office of Homeland Security (OHS) is the designated State Administrative Agency (SAA) for the federal preparedness funding programs named here. OES will coordinate with OHS to ensure that our preparedness activities and these funding programs are aligned and support NIMS implementation. This will continue to be an ongoing activity. OHS representatives serve as members of not only the Advisory Board but also the SEMS Technical Group.

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**4. Incorporating NIMS into Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs).**

This FY 2005 requirement applies to states; however, local and tribal governments should initiate activities to support NIMS compliance. At the state level, OES has reviewed the *State Emergency Plan* and has determined that for purposes of FY 2005 NIMS requirements, the *State Emergency Plan* is substantially NIMS-compliant given that the *State Emergency Plan* is based upon the concepts and principles of SEMS.

To assist local and tribal governments meet this requirement, the Federal government has announced that they will provide a template for incorporating NIMS into EOPs. In addition, as part of ongoing technical assistance and coordination activities, OES will provide written guidance on how state, local, and tribal governments can incorporate NIMS into their EOPs.

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**5. Promotion of intrastate mutual aid agreements.**

California has the oldest and probably one of the most frequently used interstate mutual aid agreements – California Disaster and Civil Defense and Master Mutual Aid Agreement. The State, all counties, and a majority of cities adopted this agreement. The agreement enables the sharing of

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every type of emergency response resource (firefighting, law enforcement, medical, etc.) between all jurisdictions. Some disciplines, such as law enforcement and fire and rescue, have developed specific mutual aid plans in support of this master agreement.

To improve upon our ability to assist and receive assistance from other states and communities nationally, OES has sponsored legislation addressing the inclusion of California to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

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**6. Coordinating and providing technical assistance to local entities regarding NIMS.**

For the State's role in coordinating and providing technical assistance to local entities regarding NIMS, California is employing the SEMS Maintenance System to ensure participation and broad representation of the emergency management community. The SEMS Technical Group and its Specialist Committees encompass state, local, and tribal governments; emergency management associations; non-governmental organizations; and the private sector. The SEMS Technical Group will be instrumental in the development of policy recommendations and guidance for NIMS implementation.

Coordinating and providing technical assistance to state, local, and tribal entities constitutes an ongoing activity, which will involve all these agencies to achieve full SEMS/NIMS integration. This technical assistance program includes several components--coordinating assistance programs with the Federal government, developing and disseminating web-based guidance materials, and convening SEMS Technical Group and Specialist Committee meetings to address SEMS/NIMS implementation issues.

A component of the state's technical assistance program is the development of guidance materials and an enhanced OES web site where the State will post critical state and federal guidance materials relative to SEMS/NIMS integration. This activity is currently underway; this section of the OES Web site will ultimately function as a clearinghouse for our constituents to not only find links to key Web sites but also to find information relative to other federal initiatives, such as the National Response Plan and HSPD-8 (the National Preparedness Goal), and to state-specific guidance on activities relative to the SEMS Maintenance System and revision of the State Emergency Plan.

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**State, Local, and Tribal Levels Should Support NIMS Implementation by  
Initiating the Following Activities**

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- 7. Formally recognizing the NIMS and adopting the NIMS principles and policies.**  
The State of California fulfilled the requirement to formally recognize NIMS and adopt NIMS principles and policies with Governor Schwarzenegger's issuance of Executive Order S-02-05, noting that the Standardized Emergency Management System substantially meets the objectives of the NIMS. OES is identifying measures that local and tribal governments can take to formally recognize the NIMS and adopt the NIMS principles and policies. Concurrently, the NIC will provide sample language and templates.
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- 8. Establish a NIMS baseline by determining which NIMS requirements you already meet.**  
The State, in coordination with the SEMS Maintenance System, is developing a process and a method to establish a NIMS baseline to determine which NIMS requirements the State meets and those requirements which may require additional work to meet.
- DHS has developed the National Incident Management System Capability Assessment Support Tool (NIMCAST) that can be used to establish a NIMS baseline. This is a tool that can help determine the extent to which the State does or does not meet the NIMS requirements. NIMCAST is a web-based self-assessment system that states, local government, and tribal governments can use to evaluate their incident response and management capabilities.
- The State has elected to use NIMCAST to establish this baseline. Those entities who will be invited to be part of the State's assessment include California's 58 counties, nine UASI cities and Fresno, key state agencies with primary lead/support roles in the *State Emergency Plan*, and those federally recognized tribal governments that wish to participate. These entities will be asked to provide official, vetted information about their organizational or jurisdictional capabilities and NIMS compliance status. NIMCAST has a "roll-up" feature that combines all entries in each state for a composite "baseline" of compliance.
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9. **Establish a timeframe and develop a strategy for full NIMS implementation.**

By FY 2007, federal preparedness assistance will be conditioned by full compliance with the NIMS. To facilitate and advance California's compliance with NIMS, OES has reinvigorated the [SEMS Maintenance System](#), as outlined in the OES Director's October 13, 2004 letter regarding NIMS compliance. This system was developed to address the need for system changes and is comprised of an Advisory Board, Technical Group, Specialist Committees, and Mutual Aid Regional Advisory Committees. Collectively, these multi-agency, multi-discipline groups provide the input necessary to ensure effective changes to the system.

To develop a strategy for full NIMS implementation, the State, through the SEMS Maintenance System, is developing a SEMS/NIMS integration plan. OES has convened five Specialist Committees specifically to address areas of SEMS/NIMS integration to meet NIMS compliance requirements. They are: After Action/Corrective Action; Private Sector, Volunteer, and Nongovernmental Organizations; Qualification and Certification; Resource Management; and Training and Exercises.

The Specialist Committees are responsible for identifying a process and timeline for implementation of a discrete part of NIMS, through development of a SEMS/NIMS Integration Plan. Four other Specialist Committees were identified and will be activated as we move further in the integration process. These additional committees are: Tribal Government, Recovery, Mitigation, and Strategic Planning.

This Plan will outline the State's strategy and corresponding activities California will undertake to ensure full NIMS implementation by FY 2007. The plan will include specific timeframes for each activity to be accomplished by fiscal year and entity. Again, because the Federal government has not released the specific FY 2006 NIMS requirements for "full NIMS compliance," the SEMS Technical Group will develop this Plan in stages.

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10. **Completing the NIMS Awareness Course: "National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction" (IS 700)**

For FY 2005, there are no NIMS training requirements; however, the federal government is encouraging completion of the NIMS Awareness Course - IS 700. The NIC suggests that emergency personnel with a direct role in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response

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take this course. In recent discussion with the NIC, they anticipate IS 700 being a requirement for NIMS compliance for FY 2006.

IS 700 is an independent study course developed by the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) that explains the purpose, principles, key components, and benefits of NIMS. The course is available online on the EMI web page at: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>

The NIC released a NIMS Alert providing guidance on who should take the IS 700 course. This Alert is posted on the OES website at [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov) under the NIMS/SEMS button as well as on the FEMA website.

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- 11. Institutionalize the use of the ICS.**  
If not already using ICS, state, local, and tribal governments must institutionalize the use of ICS (consistent with the concepts and principles taught by DHS) across the entire response system.
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## Attachment 2

### NIMS COMPLIANCE – TRAINING

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*Training Requirements* The NIMS Integration Center (NIC) is the agency responsible for overseeing NIMS training compliance requirements. The criteria used by the NIC to determine NIMS-compliant training are ICS objectives in the NIMS National Standard Training Guidance which can be found at the NIMS homepage at [www.fema.gov/nims](http://www.fema.gov/nims).

The NIC has specifically identified CA FIRESCOPE Incident Command System (ICS) courses as being equivalent to the NIMS Incident Command System, and therefore, NIMS compliant. California's SEMS Approved Course of Instruction (ACI) field courses are based on FIRESCOPE ICS, incorporate those objectives, and are NIMS-compliant.

Pursuant to the SEMS regulations and as applicable to your organization, most of your emergency response personnel should have completed the necessary SEMS courses, many of which will satisfy NIMS requirements. If you have developed your own SEMS course, be sure to compare your objectives with the NIMS National Standard Training Guidance ICS objectives.

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*Training Contacts* Curry Mayer is the OES point of contact for all SEMS/NIMS training. For specific questions concerning **SEMS/NIMS training**, you can contact her at [SEMSTRN@oes.ca.gov](mailto:SEMSTRN@oes.ca.gov). She will be working with a team of OES staff to meet your needs.

The following individuals are also available for discipline-specific ICS questions:

- Law Enforcement Incident Command System (LEICS):  
Charlie Simpson - [Charlie.Simpson@oes.ca.gov](mailto:Charlie.Simpson@oes.ca.gov), or Paula Carr – [Paula.Carr@oes.ca.gov](mailto:Paula.Carr@oes.ca.gov)
- Hospital Emergency Incident Command System (HEICS): Cheri Hummel at [Cheri.Hummel@emsa.ca.gov](mailto:Cheri.Hummel@emsa.ca.gov) or (916) 322-4336.
- FIRESCOPE Incident Command System (ICS): Steve Gage, at [Steve.Gage@oes.ca.gov](mailto:Steve.Gage@oes.ca.gov)

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*IS 700* For FY 2005, there are no NIMS training requirements; however, the federal government is encouraging completion of the NIMS Awareness Course - IS 700. The NIC suggests that all emergency personnel with a direct role in emergency preparedness, incident management or response take this course.

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## **NIMS COMPLIANCE – TRAINING (cont'd)**

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*Other courses* In recent discussion with the NIC, they anticipate IS 700 being a requirement for NIMS compliance for FY 2006. In addition, the NIC anticipates the following courses being FY 2006 requirements for certain emergency personnel: Introduction to Incident Command System - ICS 100, Basic Incident Command System – ICS 200, and The National Response Plan - IS 800.

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*Contractors* *Please note:* There are a number of contractors offering SEMS and NIMS training courses stating they are NIMS certified. We encourage you to use due diligence when choosing a contractor to provide training services. OES guidelines and materials on SEMS/NIMS are available on our website free of charge. We understand that this is a demanding effort and encourage you to prioritize who should be trained by position title.

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## NIMS - ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE NOW

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### 1. CHECK THE OES WEB SITE FOR NIMS/SEMS INFORMATION

We have added a new section on our website called NIMS/SEMS. We will continually be updating this section of our website to provide you with the most current information and guidance materials. Simply go to [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov) and click on the NIMS/SEMS button. Feel free to add our website to your employee intranets or public website.

### 2. TAKE THE NIMS AWARENESS COURSE

The NIMS Integration Center encourages all emergency response personnel with a direct role in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response to take the NIMS Awareness Course IS 700 by October 1, 2005; however, this is not a FY 2005 requirement. You may complete the NIMS Awareness Course, available online through FEMA's website, <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslst.asp> or in classroom format from FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) at [www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/](http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/), which is free of charge. A detailed list of categories of personnel recommended to take this training is available at the above web address.

### 3. FIND OUT WHO NEEDS NIMS-COMPLIANT ICS TRAINING AND TRAIN THEM

As NIMS is based on the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) ICS, FIRESCOPE ICS and the SEMS Field course are also based on NWCG ICS. Many of your responders have already taken either SEMS Field or FIRESCOPE ICS courses. You may want to identify additional personnel in your jurisdiction or agency who need this training. The SEMS Approved Course of Instruction (ACI) is available at the OES Web site [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov) or the CSTI Web site [www.csti.ca.gov](http://www.csti.ca.gov). In addition to field operations, this material includes: Introduction to SEMS, Emergency Operations Center Course, and an Executive Course.

### 4. PREVIEW THE IS 800 COURSE – NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN

Consider who in your agency or jurisdiction may need to take the IS 800 – National Response Plan course should it be a requirement in FY 2006. You may wish to preview the course which is available at <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is800.asp>

### 5. READ THE NIMS NATIONAL STANDARD CURRICULUM TRAINING DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

Read the National Incident Management System National Standard Curriculum Training Development Guidance available at the NIMS Homepage at [www.fema.gov/nims](http://www.fema.gov/nims), or for specific questions on NIMS ICS, email the NIMS Integration Center at [NIMS-Integration-Center@dhs.gov](mailto:NIMS-Integration-Center@dhs.gov)

### 6. REVIEW THE FAQs ON NIMS

Frequently Asked Questions on NIMS compliance are available from FEMA at [www.faq.fema.gov](http://www.faq.fema.gov) or the NIMS Homepage [www.fema.gov/nims](http://www.fema.gov/nims)

### 7. READ THE NIMS ALERTS

Check the NIMS Alerts on the NIMS Homepage at <http://www.fema.gov/nims/>