NIMS and ICS for Animal Health Emergencies

What is the National Incident Management System (NIMS)?

NIMS is a nationwide template that standardized the management processes, protocols and procedures for emergency responses at all levels of government, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations. The NIMS helps with coordination in preparing for, preventing, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating the effects of incidents. It works regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity of the incident and helps to reduce the loss of life, property, and harm to the environment.

What is the Incident Command System?

The Incident Command System (ICS) is an on-scene management tool used for the coordination of an emergency response involving multiple agencies and personnel. ICS has a well defined organizational structure that enables officials and responders from Federal, State, local and tribal agencies as well as the private sector and non-governmental organizations to effectively work together despite jurisdictional boundaries. ICS is applicable to small and large incidents, and adjusts to the complexity and demands of each incident.

How are NIMS and ICS used during animal disease emergency events?

The ICS structure has a top down structure with five key functional areas: the Command Post, the Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance/Administration functions.

The Inciident Command Post (CP) is the on-scene management site. It is led by an Incident Commander (IC), who is in charge of all site functions. The Incident Commander may appoint assistants to help in managing specific areas of the incident; these include the Safety Officer, the Information Officer and the Liaison Officer.

NIMS is a document describing the organizational processes for incident preparedness and response.

ICS is the on-scene management tool used to coordinate a response involving multiple personnel and agencies.

An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is a physical location for the coordination of information and resources to support incident management activities.

Incident Command Post

Under ICS, there are various functional areas for the incident. Each is headed by a Section Chief, who reports directly to the Incident Commander. The four functional areas are Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance/Administration.

The Operations division is responsible for direct actions needed to save lives, reduce the hazard, protect property, and restore normalcy during the incident.

The Planning division collects, evaluates, and disseminates information about the incident and status of resources.

The Logistics division provides facilities, services and material.

The Finance and Administration function handles tracking all incident costs.

The term Unified Command is used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions.

Area Command involves the management of multiple incidents, which are handled by separate Incident Command Posts or when very large or complex incidents require multiple task teams. For animal disease emergencies, the State Veterinarian and the Federal Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC), serve as the Area Commanders.
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Area Command Structure

This diagram shows the organization of a larger scale incident. Area command is established to oversee the management of several Incident Command Posts (ICP). The EOC (local, state, national) is a physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support local incident management activities normally takes place.

Animal Health Incident Command System

For More Information

http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/resources.shtm
IS-100. Introduction to Incident Command System, I-100
http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100.asp
IS-200. ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is200.asp
IS-700, National Incident Management System (NIMS)
http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp