Next we will overview the coordination mechanisms of any emergency response, including animal disease emergencies. These include NIMS, the National Incident Command System and ICS, the Incident Command Structure.

In February 2003, Homeland Security Presidential Directive–5 (HSPD-5) was created to “enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents by establishing a single, comprehensive national incident management system”. This lead to the creation of NIMS, the National Incident Management System, a nationwide template that standardized incident management processes, protocols and procedures for all responders whether governmental, private-sector or NGO. NIMS also mandates the use of the Incident Command System, which we will talk about later.

NIMS consists of a core set of principles, terminology and organizational processes that establish standardization of the management of an incident. The system is flexible and adaptable and can be used regardless of the cause, size, location or complexity of the hazard. This allows Government and private entities to work together.

This is a brief summary of the major components of the NIMS. 1) Command and Management: There are three organizational systems for command and management in NIMS. They are ICS, Multiagency Coordination Systems and Public Information System. 2) Preparedness activities are done prior to events and include planning, training, exercises, and determining qualifications and certification. 3) Resource Management is important for describing, inventorying, mobilizing, dispatching, tracking, and recovering resources. 4) Communications and Information Management serves to standardize communications processes, procedures, and systems across all agencies and jurisdictions. Information must flow efficiently through a commonly accepted architecture. 5) Supporting Technologies provide voice and data communication systems, information management systems (record keeping and resource tracking), and data display systems. 6) Ongoing Management and Maintenance provides strategic direction and oversight of the NIMS.

NIMS aligns command & control, organization structure, terminology, communication protocols, resources and resource typing to enable synchronization of efforts in response to an incident at all levels of government. Resources, knowledge, and abilities from the various Federal Departments and Agencies are outlined in the National Response Framework.
The Incident Command System (ICS) is mandated by NIMS. It is a standardized on-scene emergency management tool that allows responders to coordinate and combine their efforts. ICS has an integrated organizational structure with incorporation of officials and responders from Federal, State, local and tribal agencies as well as the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The system allows function without hindering jurisdictional boundaries.

As previously mentioned, ICS is adjustable depending on the complexity or demands of the incident. The organization structure can be adapted for a variety of situations, including single jurisdiction/single agency events, single jurisdiction with multi-agency involvement, and multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency operations.

The structure of the ICS is a modular format. It is a top down structure with five key functional areas. The Command Post, the Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance/Administration functions.

The Command Post (CP) is the on-scene management site. It is lead by an Incident Commander, who by legal, agency or delegated authority is in charge of all functions of the situation. 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. The Safety officer is responsible for oversight and verification of safe practices and procedures at the incident site. The Information Officer handles issues and communication with the media. The Liaison Officer serves as a point of contact for the various agencies assisting with the incident.

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The term Unified Command is used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions. Normally, individual agency responsibilities and authority are legally confined to a single jurisdiction. The goals of Unified Command are to develop objective for the entire incident, improve information flow and interaction among all agencies involved in incident response, develop single collective approach to incident response, optimize efforts of all agencies to perform their respective missions by reducing or eliminating duplicate efforts or missions.

Area Command involves the management of multiple incidents, which are handled by separate Incident Command Posts (ICP) or when very large or complex incidents require multiple task teams. Area Command may be established at an emergency operations center (EOC) facility or at some location other than an ICP. For animal disease emergencies, the State Veterinarian and the Federal Area-Veterinarian-in-Charge (AVIC), or their Federal or State representative, serve as the Area Commanders in each State in the ICS system. As such, they are responsible for all animal health emergency response activities within their Area (State). They also share responsibility for establishing one or more Incident Management Teams in their Area and for ensuring that these teams are trained and capable of meeting or helping to meet the response management needs of the State and the Nation.

This slide shows the organization of a larger scale incident. Area command is established to oversee the management of the various Incident Command Posts (ICP). The ICPs are the field locations at which the primary tactical-level, on-scene incident command functions are performed. 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.

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 tactical concerns at the incident. The Planning function is responsible for collecting, evaluating, disseminating and using information about the incident and status of resources.

The Logistics function is responsible for providing facilities, services and material. The Finance and Administration function handles tracking all incident costs.
This is a more detailed view of the various sections in a Animal Health Incident Command. Operations (field) organization is grouped by task (e.g., diagnostics, epidemiology, surveillance, euthanasia, cleaning and disinfection).

Once incident command is established and a incident command post is identified, the needed responders are notified. The situation is assessed and documented. Depending on the size of the incident, activation of the local plan may be needed.

In analyzing the complexity of an incident, the Emergency Incident Management and Typing System may be useful. It can help characterize a situation and identify safety issues and key areas of complexity. Incident complexity is categorized in a range of Type 5 Incident (comparatively short time and minor levels of resources) to a Type 1 Incident (need for significant human and material resources and committed for a longer time period).

It is important to remember that each incident will be LOCAL. Therefore local planning is needed to best prepare for an event. Although State and Federal agencies will respond, once the situation is controlled, the long term recovery process is locally based.

It is not the goal of this presentation to cover all of the facets of ICS or NIMS in depth. There are a number of on-line courses that can be taken (and listed at the end).
For More Information

- NRF Resource Center
- NRF Brochure
- NRF Fact Sheet
- NRF Frequently Asked Questions

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