

## Continuity of Management Tools Preparedness

*The Continuity of Management Tools will help you complete the questions on Management of Core Operations in section 2.4 of the Pandemic Influenza Plan Template.*

The Continuity of Management Tools were developed to help you determine how your district will manage continuity of operations and instruction during a worst-case scenario pandemic influenza. The following tools will assist you in making your decision:

- Federal Emergency Management Guidance on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS)
- U.S. Department of Education Guidance on School Emergency Planning and ICS
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Guidance on Continuity of Operations Planning
- Sample District ICS Organization for Continuity of Operations during an Influenza Pandemic

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency Guidance on NIMS/ICS**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security. It leads and supports a comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation. In this capacity FEMA develops National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance criteria and implementation activities and provides support to jurisdictions and responder organizations at the federal, state and local level. Adherence to the National Incident Management System is a federal government requirement for all government emergency planning, response, and recovery.

FEMA publishes frequently asked questions regarding NIMS Compliance. FEMA's response to the following question provides direction to school districts on NIMS compliance.

*Q: Are school districts required to be NIMS compliant? Has there been any clarification as to the need for public school district personnel to take any NIMS courses?*

*A: Since school districts are an integral part of local government, their use of NIMS should be achieved in close coordination with other components of the*

*local government. School districts are not traditional response organizations and more typically are recipients of first responder services provided by fire and rescue, emergency medical and law enforcement agencies. This traditional relationship should be acknowledged in achieving NIMS compliance within an integrated local government plan for NIMS compliance. School district participation in local government's NIMS preparedness program is essential to ensure that first responder services are delivered to schools in a timely and effective manner. Accordingly, school districts that receive federal preparedness funds must require that the appropriate personnel take the IS-700 NIMS introductory course....However, it would be useful for all staff and teachers likely to be involved in emergency activities should the need arise, to take the IS-700 NIMS introductory course, including those districts that do not receive preparedness funding at this time.*

*The following hyperlink to the Department of Education's summary of frequently asked questions regarding FY 2006 NIMS requirements for schools includes a checklist that schools can use to chart their progress towards supporting the implementation of NIMS based on the FY 2006 compliance activities. Helpful Hints for School Emergency Management, The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Schools is available at:  
[http://ercm.ed.gov/views/documents/HH\\_NIMS.pdf](http://ercm.ed.gov/views/documents/HH_NIMS.pdf)*

### ***NIMS and the Incident Command System***

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is:

- A comprehensive national framework designed to efficiently support incident management at all jurisdictional levels, regardless of the size, nature, or complexity of the event.
- A core set of concepts, principles, and terminology for incident command and multi-agency coordination.

Implementing NIMS is important because it achieves unified, single-agency and interagency management in emergency response.

Under NIMS, the framework of operations is the Incident Command System (ICS). NIMS requires the use of the ICS by all levels of government and by healthcare organizations.

The purpose of the ICS is to provide an interdisciplinary and flexible management system that is adaptable to an incident of any kind or size. The ICS defines a clear chain-of-command and provides logistical and administrative support to operational staff responding to an incident.

## U.S. Department of Education Guidance on School Emergency Planning and ICS

Although schools are not traditional first responders (e.g., police, fire, emergency medical services, public health, etc.), it is critical that schools understand the Incident Command System.

The Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education's 2007 *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities* was developed to help schools navigate the emergency planning process. It gives schools, districts, and communities the critical concepts and components of good crisis planning, stimulates thinking about the crisis preparedness process, and provides examples of promising practices.

This schools toolkit is consistent with *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*. It is organized to reflect the sequence of crisis management:

- Prevention (addresses what schools and districts can do to reduce or eliminate pandemic influenza risks to health and life).
- Preparedness (focuses on the process of planning for the worst-case scenario pandemic influenza).
- Response (specifies the steps to take during an influenza pandemic).
- Recovery (deals with how to restore the learning and teaching environment after the pandemic).

The guide's section on preparedness and on the incident command system provides information on the role of school personnel in the incident command system. It recommends:

- *An ICS and/or other management plan needs to be created with all emergency responders and school officials before a crisis occurs.* This is because, when there is an emergency on campus (e.g., fire, bomb threat, suicide, shooting, etc.), the first responder that is the local authority for the emergency in the jurisdiction will set up the incident command system upon arrival on campus and serve as the incident commander. The school ICS will integrate into the first responder ICS at that time. *ICS provides a structured way for delegating responsibilities among school officials and all emergency responders during crisis response.*
- *Learn what roles the first responder will play, what responsibilities they will take on, and how they will interact with school staff. Schools need to be prepared to interact with the first responder and to take immediate action to protect students and staff. Especially important is determining who will communicate with families and the community during an incident.*

- *Prepare for immediate response. At the time of the incident, you will need to quickly determine whether students and staff need to be evacuated from the building, returned to the building, locked down in the building, or relocated to a remote site.*
  - *Define roles and responsibilities. Define what should happen, when, and at whose direction—that is, create an organizational system.... School staff should be assigned to the following roles:*
    - *School commander (to manage the students and staff)*
    - *Liaison to emergency responders (let first responder agencies know who this person is)*
    - *Student caregivers*
    - *Security officers*
    - *Medical staff*
    - *Spokesperson or Public Information Officer.*
- During the planning process, personnel and backups should be assigned to fill these roles.*

Once first responder roles and responsibilities are understood, you will be better able to plan for school personnel integration into the ICS created by the first responder to manage a campus emergency. Creating a “sample” ICS or emergency response organization enables schools to be better prepared when an emergency strikes:

- To implement a school ICS immediately.
- To integrate management of school responsibilities with the first responder upon their arrival.

The following tools will assist schools in creating a “sample” ICS or emergency response organization for incidents at your school.

*Tools:*

- *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*, January 2007, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, US Dept. of Education:  
[www.ed.gov/emergencyplan](http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan)
- FEMA Introduction to the Incident Command System for Schools:  
<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS100SC/index.htm>.
- *Preparedness Emergency Management for Schools*, April 10-11, 2008, New Orleans, LA is a PowerPoint presentation: To download it, go to: [rems.ed.gov/views/documents/Training\\_NOLA08\\_Preparedness.ppt](http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/Training_NOLA08_Preparedness.ppt) This PowerPoint presentation provides helpful information on how a school and first responder integrate operations in an incident ICS.

## FEMA Guidance on Continuity of Operations Planning

A continuity of operations plan is an organization's plan for continuing its core operations or essential functions during an emergency. Through continuity of operations planning, an organization's essential personnel are identified—they are the personnel required to continue the organization's core operations or essential functions.

Key COOP issues during a severe pandemic are the need to be prepared to:

- Continue core operations in spite of high employee absenteeism due to illness and/or caring for ill family members, which requires deep lines of succession for critical positions.
- Encourage behaviors that limit the spread of the influenza virus, such as, covering the cough, washing hands, and staying home when ill.
- Modify work place schedules and practices to limit the spread of the influenza virus by reducing social contacts.

In the FEMA frequently asked questions regarding NIMS Compliance mentioned previously, there is also a question about the relationship between NIMS, the NRP (National Response Plan), and COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan).

*Q: What is the relationship between NIMS, the NRP, and COOP?*

*A: The NIMS provides a consistent framework for incident management at all jurisdictional levels regardless of the cause, size or complexity of the incident. Building upon the Incident Command System (ICS), the NIMS provides the nation's first responders and authorities with the same foundation for incident management for terrorist attacks, natural disasters and other emergencies.*

*The NRP is an all-discipline, all-hazards plan for the management of domestic incidents. Using the template established by the NIMS, the NRP provides the structure and mechanisms to coordinate and integrate incident management activities and emergency support functions across Federal, State, tribal and local government entities, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations.*

*COOP planning is simply a "good business practice"-part of the fundamental mission of agencies as responsible and reliable public institutions. Today's changing threat environment and the potential for no-notice emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, technological emergencies, and military or terrorist attack-related incidents, have increased the need for COOP capabilities and plans that enable agencies to continue their essential functions across a broad spectrum of emergencies....*

*FEMA is responsible for formulating guidance and establishing common standards for agencies to use in developing viable, executable COOP plans.*

The Department of Homeland Security has a Web site called “Ready Business” (<http://www.ready.gov/business/plan/index.html>) that encourages all businesses to develop continuity of operations plans.

A resource for continuity of operations plan guidance is the Maryland Emergency Management Agency’s *Preparing for an Emergency: Continuity of Operations Planning for Public Institutions*. It is available at:  
<http://www.umaryland.edu/healthsecurity/navigation/Version%202%20Final%20Coop%20Manual.pdf>

A resource for continuity of operations that focuses on an influenza pandemic is *Federal Guidance to Assist States in Improving State-Level Pandemic Influenza Operating Plans*, which is available at:  
<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/news/guidance031108.pdf>

As the above guidance indicates, schools are encouraged to develop continuity of operations plans.

### **Sample District ICS Organization for Continuity of Operations during an Influenza Pandemic**

During an influenza pandemic, the Public Health Department is the local authority for the emergency in the jurisdiction. Public Health will be creating the ICS to respond to the pandemic. The *Santa Clara County Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan* will guide the emergency response.

During peak waves of a severe pandemic, all businesses—public (including schools) and private—will need to activate their continuity of operations plans (COOPs). While each organization’s COOP is part of the organization’s emergency response, all of the COOP plans that will be activated during the pandemic by all public and private organizations/businesses are not a part of the Public Health ICS established for emergency response.

No guidance requiring schools to institute an ICS to manage continuity of operations and instruction when schools are closed during a pandemic has been identified. As a result, schools can manage continuity of operations during school closure by:

- Using their normal system of management (ensuring that there are deep lines of succession for key management positions) OR
- Instituting an ICS (ensuring that there are deep lines of succession for key management positions).

It is up to each district to determine ICS uses outside the federally-mandated emergency response guidelines. If your district decides to manage continuity of operations using an ICS organization, the following two tools will assist you:

- Sample District ICS Organization with ICS Roles Specified
- Sample District ICS Organization with Space to Fill-in Key Personnel and Backup.

### ***A Few Notes on the Sample ICS Organization for Continuity of Operations***

This sample ICS organization depicts a possible organization for a K-12 school district continuity of operations during a school closure.

The Incident Commander (IC) only creates those sections that are needed. If a section is not staffed, the IC manages those functions.

The Command Staff (IC, Public Information Officer, Liaison Officer, and Safety Officer) provide information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization.

The General Staff (Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Admin Section Chief) are assigned functional authority.

The General Staff assume all responsibilities of the Branches/Groups/Units under them if they are not staffed. The sections can be expanded and contracted as needed