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LESSON LEARNED

School Safety: Implementation of the National Incident Management System by Schools

SUMMARY

The implementation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) continues to be a challenge for some primary, secondary, and higher education institutions.

DESCRIPTION

The implementation of NIMS is required for all primary, secondary, and higher education institutions that receive Federal preparedness monies from the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. An analysis of after action reports (AARs) from both exercises and real world events demonstrates the importance of the use of NIMS by all levels of educational institutions. These AARs illustrate how educational institutions that have implemented NIMS are able to coordinate effectively with local emergency personnel to manage response operations, resources, public information, and for other activities. Further, this has been beneficial for incidents on school grounds as well as for incidents that affect the wider community. For example, the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools provided a wide range of critical assistance after devastating floods struck the region in 2010.



2010 Flood Damage in the Nashville, Tennessee, Area

However, these AARs also indicate that some schools have either not implemented NIMS or done so to a partial degree. Consequently, these schools are less prepared for their responses to incidents at their facilities and for coordinating with local emergency personnel. The AARs indicate that these schools encounter difficulties coordinating with the Incident Commander, the Incident Command Post, and within a Unified Command during incidents at their facilities.

Further, these schools are often unprepared for the transition of incident command from school officials to the first responders to the incident. Overall, this lack of coordination leads

to a range of problems, including contradictory public messages and inefficient use of resources. While many schools have created emergency management teams, some have not organized these teams according to NIMS and incident command system (ICS) principles. These AARs identify a number of areas for improvement related to school implementation of NIMS and ICS, including:

- Ensuring that senior school officials—administrators, district supervisors, principals, etc.—receive the requisite NIMS and ICS training
- Ensuring that school emergency management teams receive ICS training and are organized according to ICS concepts and principles
- Conducting joint ICS training for school and local emergency personnel, including about the transition from school personnel to first responders

About This *LLIS.gov* document

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov) reviewed exercise and incident AARs and other documents on the *LLIS.gov* system to develop this *LLIS.gov* document. *LLIS.gov* will revise and update this document as new information is received. If you wish to contribute to this *LLIS.gov* document, please email your data, information, or documents to research@llis.dhs.gov.

CITATIONS

Lessons Learned Information Sharing School Emergency Management Planning: Overview. 05 Oct 2007.

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