Part One, Section Four
National Incident Management System (NIMS)

General
Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5) established the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the required emergency/disaster response system. NIMS integrates existing best practices into a consistent, flexible and adjustable nationwide approach for emergency management. Using NIMS, Federal, State, local and tribal governments; the private sector and non-governmental organizations work together to prepare for, respond to and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size or complexity.

NIMS Components
Six major components make up NIMS.

Command and Management
NIMS standard incident command structures are based on three key organizational systems:

- **The Incident Command System (ICS)** – ICS is a standardized, all-hazard incident management concept. Its organizational structure allows its users to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Multi Agency Coordination Systems (MACS)** – Provides coordination for incident prioritization, critical resource allocation, communications systems and information coordination. These systems include facilities, equipment, emergency operation centers (EOCs), personnel, procedures and communications.
- **Public Information Systems (PIS) –** These refer to processes, procedures and systems for communicating timely and accurate information to the public during crisis or emergency situations.

Preparedness
Effective incident management begins with a host of preparedness activities conducted on an ongoing basis, well in advance of any potential incident. Preparedness involves an integrated combination of planning, training, exercises, personnel qualification and certification standards, equipment acquisition and certification standards, and publication management processes and activities.
- **Planning** – Plans describe how personnel, equipment, and other resources are used to support incident management and emergency response activities. Plans provide mechanisms and systems for setting priorities, integrating multiple entities and functions, and ensuring that communications and other systems are available and integrated in support of a full spectrum of incident management requirements.
- **Training** – Training includes standard courses on multi agency incident command and management, organizational structure, and operational procedures; discipline-

specific and agency-specific incident management courses; and courses on the integration and use of supporting technologies.

- **Exercises** – Incident management organizations and personnel must participate in realistic exercises—including multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-sector interaction—to improve integration and interoperability and optimize resource utilization during incident operations.
- **Personnel Qualification and Certification** –Qualification and certification activities are undertaken to identify and publish national-level standards and measure performance against these standards to ensure that incident management and emergency responder personnel are appropriately qualified and officially certified to perform NIMS-related functions.
- **Equipment Acquisition and Certification** – Incident management organizations and emergency responders at all levels rely on various types of equipment to perform mission essential tasks. A critical component of operational preparedness is the acquisition of equipment that will perform to certain standards, including the capability to be interoperable with similar equipment used by other jurisdictions.
- **Mutual Aid** – Mutual-aid agreements are the means for one jurisdiction to provide resources, facilities, services, and other required support to another jurisdiction during an incident. Each jurisdiction should be party to a mutual-aid agreement with appropriate jurisdictions from which they expect to receive or to which they expect to provide assistance during an incident.
- **Publications Management** – Publications management refers to forms and forms standardization, developing publication materials, administering publications—including establishing naming and numbering conventions, managing the publication and promulgation of documents, and exercising control over sensitive documents—and revising publications when necessary.

Resource Management
The NIMS defines standardized mechanisms and establishes requirements for processes to describe, inventory, mobilize, dispatch, track, and recover resources over the life cycle of an incident.

Communications and Information Management
The NIMS identifies the requirement for a standardized framework for communications, information management (collection, analysis, and dissemination), and information-sharing at all levels of incident management. These elements are briefly described as follows:

- **Incident Management Communications** – Incident management organizations must ensure that effective, interoperable communications processes, procedures, and systems exist to support a wide variety of incident management activities across agencies and jurisdictions.
- **Information Management –** Information management processes, procedures, and systems help ensure that information, including communications and data, flows efficiently through a commonly accepted architecture supporting numerous agencies and jurisdictions responsible for managing or directing domestic incidents, those impacted by the incident, and those contributing resources to the incident management effort. Effective information management enhances incident

management and response and helps insure that crisis decision-making is better informed.

Supporting Technologies
Technology and technological systems provide supporting capabilities essential to implementing and continuously refining the NIMS. These include voice and data communications systems, information management systems (i.e., record keeping and resource tracking), and data display systems. Also included are specialized technologies that facilitate ongoing operations and incident management activities in situations that call for unique technology-based capabilities.

Ongoing Management and Maintenance
This component provides strategic direction for and oversight of the NIMS, supporting both routine review and the continuous refinement of the system and its components over the long term.

NIMS Compliance
The State of California's NIMS Advisory Committee issued "*California Implementation Guidelines for the National Incident Management System*" to assist state agencies, local governments, tribes and special districts to incorporate NIMS into already existing programs, plans, training and exercises.   The City is following this document to ensure NIMS compliance.

Cities should be familiar with the National Response Framework and the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) process that may provide federal assistance for response and recovery.