NIMS – An Introduction
By KD5BJ For Lee County TX ARES

As you know, in order to help our County in moment of need, or simply to train with County agencies, or other organizations such as other ARES, RACES, Civil Air Patrol and others, we need to know the rules of engagement to be able to be on the same page with our emergency partners. Therefore, tonight I am going to start a series on NIMS and ICS to refresh the mind of some of us who took the class and to help those who still need to take them to be successful in their certification.

Tonight, I am going to introduce NIMS

National Incident Management System

On February 28, 2003, the President directed Secretary of Homeland security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS). This system provides a consistent nationwide template to enable Federal, State, tribal, and local governments, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations, such as ARES, to work together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity.

NIMS is NOT an operational incident management or resource allocation plan. NIMS represents a core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes that enables effective, efficient, and collaborative incident management. It is mandatory to all federal departments and agencies.

Five major components of NIMS that work together to prevent, respond to, and recover from all types of domestic incidents are: **P**reparedness, **Communications and Information Management**, Resource management, **Command and management**, Ongoing management and maintenance

Preparedness is achieved and maintained through a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective actions.

Plans must be realistic, scalable, and applicable to all types of incidents from daily occurrences to incidents requiring the activation of interstate mutual aid, and those requiring a coordinated federal response. Plans should integrate all agencies, private sector and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the coordination of emergency management and incident response activities.

Communications Management is about flexible communications and interoperability that allow command, support elements, and cooperating partners to be on the same page in an emergency, a disaster or during a planned event.

Resource Management: is the inventorying, organizing, and tracking of resources (such as personnel, equipment, and supplies) that facilitates their dispatch, deployment, and recovery before, during, and after an incident. Resource management should be flexible and scalable to be able to adapt to the incident as it progresses or regresses.

Command and Management: consists of:
Incident Command System that provides a flexible core mechanism for coordinating the incident, from an incident managed locally by a single local jurisdiction, like a car wreck, to a complex incident with national implications.

Multiagency Coordination Systems, or MACS that involves, like the name says, several agencies and allows all levels of government and all disciplines to work together efficiently and effectively. MACS is a system, NOT a facility.

And, finally, the

Public Information System which consists of the processes, procedures, and systems to communicate timely, accurate and accessible information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation to the public, responders, and others. Public Information must be coordinated and integrated across jurisdictions and agencies and organizations.

Concept and principles of NIMS are, as you can guess, flexibility to adapt to large incident involving many agencies and organizations, like a hurricane, and small, involving a single resource unit like a single structure fire; and Standardization, to provide standards that allow very different agencies to work together in a predictable and coordinated manner.

The Incident Command System (ICS), the one we are more familiar with and that we practice, is one component of the larger NIMS framework.

And we will talk about it next time. This is the end of training for tonight, this is KD5BJ back to net.