



National Wildfire Coordinating Group

National Interagency Fire Center

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MEMORDANDUM

Reference: NWCG#008-2013

To: NWCG Executive Board, NWCG Committee Chairs, NWCG Training Branch

From: NWCG Chair *Arthur Bidabun*

Date: September 12, 2013

Subject: NWCG Decision to Stop Using the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) Name (External Release of Memo#I-503-2013, April 16, 2013.)

Decision Statement: On October 18, 2012, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Executive Board decided to:

- Recommend the NWCG partner agencies no longer use the NIIMS term,
- Remove the term NIIMS in NWCG publications when they come up for revision.

Issue: There continues to be confusion in the wildland fire organizations about the use of the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) name versus National Incident Management System (NIMS). For example, many NWCG publications use the term NIIMS, causing people in the wildland fire agencies to think we are following NIIMS and not NIMS.

Background: On February 28, 2003, President Bush issued HSPD-5 (Homeland Security Presidential Directive - Management of Domestic Incidents), directing the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop a National Incident Management System (NIMS). Based on this directive, DHS developed NIMS, which built off the framework of the wildland fire NIIMS developed in the early 1980s. The NIMS was released in 2004 and because it had essentially the same title, it created confusion within the wildland fire community. Nine years later, this confusion continues.

HSPD-5 mandates compliance with NIMS and the use of NIMS processes during domestic incidents. The NIMS is simply the framework that enables agencies to work together effectively and efficiently to respond to domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity. The NIMS does not have established systems to support its components.

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In contrast, the NIIMS has programs or systems (for example: ROSS, IQCS, the National Fire Equipment System (NFES), and Mobilization Guides) that also support the components of NIMS. The NIIMS has been an “umbrella” name for a collection of these support systems and processes. While we will no longer use the NIIMS name to avoid confusion, we are not eliminating the systems and programs.

Key Points:

- All agencies are mandated to follow the framework and components of NIMS.
- The wildland fire agencies use programs, guides, and systems – historically referred to as NIIMS – that support the agencies in order to be compliant with NIMS.
- Continuing to use the term NIIMS to describe these programs, guides, and systems causes confusion for the wildland fire agencies and FEMA.
- Currently all of the “NIIMS” systems that support NIMS are overseen by NWCG.
- Discontinuing the use of the term “NIIMS” does not change ICS, the work of NWCG, or FEMA, but simply reduces the confusion of having two “parallel” system names.
- NIIMS is an important part of wildland fire history and should not be forgotten, but continued use of the term “NIIMS” may be counter-productive to current efforts.

Questions can be directed to Nikki Saleen, NWCG Communications Specialist, 208-387-5338, email: nsaleen@blm.gov.

cc: NWCG Program Management Unit (PMU)
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