

General Order T-7



Subject NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM		
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By Order of the Police Commissioner

POLICY

It is the policy of the Baltimore Police Department to utilize the National Incident Management System (NIMS), when appropriate, to respond to and resolve incidents of a serious nature or to coordinate security for high profile events.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to familiarize all members of the Baltimore Police Department with NIMS, its procedures and requirements, and the manner in which it will be implemented during qualifying emergency events.

BACKGROUND

The National Incident Management System, commonly referred to as "NIMS," is a single, comprehensive approach to domestic incident management that enhances the ability of the United States to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other large-scale emergencies. NIMS was created by the United States Department of Homeland Security following publication of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD 5) in February, 2003.

The purpose of NIMS is to provide a consistent, nationwide approach to incident management so that Federal, State, and local government agencies can work together, effectively and efficiently, throughout the course of any multi-agency response to a widespread critical incident.

The nationwide consistency provided by NIMS results from the establishment of a set of core concepts in areas such as terminology, technology, and training. These core concepts provide a level of standardization within the first responder and public service communities so that coordinated actions may begin immediately at the outset of any response to a critical incident.

DEFINITIONS

Incident Action Plan (IAP) - An oral or written plan containing general objectives that reflect the overall strategy for managing an incident. It may at times include the identification of operational resources and assignments.

Incident Commander (IC) - The individual with overall authority and responsibility for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics, and the ordering, deployment, and release of resources.

Incident Command System (ICS) - A standardized, on-scene emergency management procedure designed to provide an integrated organizational structure, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries, during the response to and resolution of a critical incident.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) - A single, comprehensive approach to domestic incident management that enhances the ability of the United States to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies.

Unified Command (UC) - An application of the Incident Command System used when there are combined response resources from multiple political jurisdictions, various levels of government, and public service entities (e.g., Baltimore Gas & Electric, Mass Transit Administration, etc.).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Implementation of NIMS by the Baltimore Police Department, or any decision to involve the Baltimore Police Department in another agency's implementation of NIMS, may only be authorized by a command-level member of the Department holding the rank of Deputy Major or above.

Depending on the complexity of the incident and the nature of the response assets available, the first step in any implementation of NIMS will either be the establishment of an Incident Command (IC) or a Unified Command (UC). In the event either of these Commands is established, the Incident Commander or Unified Commander, or his/her direct subordinate(s), may not necessarily be members of the Baltimore Police Department. As a result, there may come a time during a NIMS-related incident when it will be necessary for members of the Baltimore Police Department to take direction from, and to follow the orders of, personnel who: may not be members of the Baltimore Police Department; may not be sworn law enforcement personnel, or; may be outside the member's normal chain of command.

It may also become necessary to suspend the use of ten-codes, and/or the use of law enforcement-specific jargon or phrases, so that personnel from outside the Department may communicate using the Baltimore Police Department's radio system. The highest ranking on-scene member of the Baltimore Police Department will inform all subordinate members when they are to begin and end operating under either of these conditions.

REQUIRED ACTION

Member

1. Members will familiarize themselves with the NIMS protocols and terminology as defined in both this Order and during training sessions provided by the Education and Training Section.
2. If the Baltimore Police Department has been authorized to participate in an implementation of NIMS, and a Unified Command has been established:
 - 2.1. Follow the orders of the Unified Commander, or his/her designee, regardless of the person's actual employer or, when applicable, his/her lack of status as a sworn law enforcement officer.
 - 2.2. Continue to operate in this manner until advised by the Communications Section that the Baltimore Police Department is no longer a part of the Unified Command.

NOTE: Members are required at all times to conform to the policies and procedures of the Baltimore Police Department, and to ensure that any police action they take is constitutionally permissible. Members are not to follow any order(s) issued by a Unified Commander, or his/her designee, if the order(s) conflict with Department policy or procedure.

3. When ordered to do so by the highest ranking on-scene member of the Baltimore Police Department, broadcast all radio communications in plain language, without the use of standard ten-codes or law enforcement-specific jargon.

Command Staff Member (Deputy Major and Above)

1. When present at the scene of a major incident or event, determine if implementation of NIMS will be necessary.
2. If it becomes necessary to implement NIMS and establish a Unified Command:
 - 2.1. Notify the Chief of Patrol, or his/her designee, and the Shift Commander, Communications Section, of this decision.
 - 2.2. Determine if the nature of the incident or event demands that Baltimore Police Department personnel should be directed to operate under the command of a member of another organization or agency.
 - 2.3. Assess the need to order members of the Baltimore Police Department to transmit all radio communications in plain language, without the use of ten-codes or law enforcement-specific jargon.
 - 2.3.1. If a change in regular radio communications is necessary, notify the Shift Commander, Communications Section.
3. Act in accordance with Departmental policies and procedures if appointed to an operational position under the command of an individual from another organization or agency.

Director, Communications Section

1. Coordinate any requests from outside agencies to merge their communications into the Baltimore Police Department's communications system.
2. Ensure that the appropriate Police Dispatchers broadcast any message from a member of the Department's Command Staff regarding:
 - 2.1. The beginning or end of the Baltimore Police Department's participation in a Unified Command.
 - 2.2. The beginning or end of any period where ten-codes and law enforcement-related jargon are not to be used.

Director, Education and Training Section

1. Ensure appropriate training in the National Incident Management System is provided through both the In-Service and Entry-Level curriculums.

RELATED PROCEDURE

United States Department of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, "Management of Domestic Incidents," dated 28 February 2003.

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

Supervisors shall be responsible for communication of this General Order to their subordinates, and to ensure compliance. This Order is effective on the date of publication, is to be read at all roll calls for five consecutive days, and is to be posted on Departmental Bulletin Boards.