National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Presenter   **Co-Presenter**
Richard Coates, P.E.
Fulton County Government
richard.coates@fultoncountyga.gov

National Incident Management System (NIMS):
While most emergency situations are handled locally, when there's a major incident help may be needed from other jurisdictions, the state and the federal government. NIMS was developed so responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines can work together better to respond to natural disasters and emergencies, including acts of terrorism. NIMS benefits include a unified approach to incident management; standard command and management structures; and emphasis on preparedness, mutual aid and resource management.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5, Management of Domestic Incidents, issued in February 2003, seeks to enhance the methods for, and capabilities of, Emergency responders to deal with domestic incidents, particularly those involving the integration and augmentation of State and local resources. There are three principal efforts:

1. The establishment of common performance standards for training emergency responders (Standards)
2. The use of common definitions for typical response resources (Resource Typing)
3. The implementation of a national system for credentialing emergency responders - a system that can be used easily to support mutual aid through the quick and accurate verification of the identity and qualifications of emergency response personnel (Credentialing) NIMS is a system of positions, teams, and resources that could be called upon to supplement resources at the local and state level.

The positions represent the leadership necessary during the response and recovery phases of a disaster of national significance. The typed resources, equipment and fully functioning teams, would be those necessary to supplement local and state resources. The vision is that when needed, resources dispatched to assist local and state governments, would perfectly meet the requested need.

Resource typing is the categorization and description of response resources that are commonly exchanged in disasters through mutual aid agreements. The National Integration Center (NIC) Incident Management Systems Division has developed and published 120 Resource Typing Definitions. The Center is continuing resource typing work and has established new working groups for the ongoing initiative. Resource typing definitions can give emergency responders the information they need to make sure they request and receive the appropriate resources during an emergency or disaster. Ordering resources, which have been typed using these definitions, make the resource request and dispatch process more accurate and efficient. In FY 2006, State, territorial, tribal and local jurisdictions were required to type their inventory response assets to conform to NIMS Resource Typing standards.

The development of a nationwide credentialing system is a fundamental component of NIMS. A national credentialing system can document minimum professional qualifications, certifications, training and education requirements that define baseline criteria expected of emergency response professionals and volunteers for deployment as mutual aid to disasters. While such a system is meant to verify the identity and qualifications of emergency responders, it does not provide automatic access to an incident site. The credentialing system can

help prevent unauthorized, i.e., self-dispatched or unqualified personnel, access to an incident site.