

USFA Advocates Development of Incident Management Teams

Stakeholders, experts develop IMT training “roadmap”

The Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) United States Fire Administration (USFA), part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), today announced a training “roadmap” for the Nation’s fire and emergency services to develop local, regional/metropolitan, and statewide Incident Management Teams (IMTs). This recommendation comes in part as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding between USFA, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the National Fire Protection Association Metro Chiefs Section to:

- Establish metro area IMT regional overhead teams based on the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) models;
- Develop IMT capability;
- Develop and train IMTs to support command;
- Provide mutual aid staff – unified command training and development;
- Utilize IEMS; and
- Develop and implement nationwide credentialing criteria/system similar to US Forest Service “Red Card” system

USFA’s IMT training roadmap, developed in partnership with USFS, also supports Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), which states:

To prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies, the United States Government shall establish a single, comprehensive approach to domestic incident management. The objective of the United States Government is to ensure that all levels of government across the Nation have the capability to work efficiently and effectively together, using a national approach to domestic incident management.

IMTs are designed to assist local emergency services manage unusually large, complex, or long-term emergency incidents. An all-hazards IMT consists of emergency service officers from appropriate disciplines (fire, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous materials, law enforcement) trained to perform the functions of the Command and General Staff of the Incident Command System (ICS). These functions include Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Administration/Finance, as well as Safety, Information, and Liaison. Members of the initial responding departments often fill these

functions; however, the size, scope, or duration of an emergency incident may indicate the need for an IMT to support them. The local Incident Commander can request, through standard mutual aid procedures, an IMT to help support management of the incident.

In August, USFA convened a Focus Group of stakeholders and experts from across the country to best determine the means to develop all-hazards IMTs across the country. In the wildland fire community, the USFS and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) recognize five “Types”, or levels, of IMTs; the Focus Group agreed to stay with this model for the all-hazards emergency response community. The IMT types, including certifying level and basic make-up, as recommended by the Focus Group are:

- Type 5 City and Township Level—Locally certified, jurisdiction specific or by mutual aid agreement.
- Type 4 County or Fire District Level—County or regionally certified, multi-agency/jurisdiction.
- Type 3 State or Large Metropolitan Area Level—State certified; state, region, or area with multi-jurisdictions or mutual aid agreements.
- Type 2 National and State Level—Federally or State certified, less staffing and experience than Type 1, smaller scale incident, now in existence.
- Type 1 National and State Level—Federally or State certified, most experience, most equipped, now in existence.

USFA’s IMT training roadmap, recommended by the Focus Group, identifies the training needed to develop Types 3, 4, and 5 IMTs. The IMT training roadmap recommends that:

- All emergency service personnel should take training equivalent to the NWCG courses, *ICS 100, 200, and 300*, either web-based or classroom. An example of a course that may meet this requirement is USFA’s 2-day *Incident Command System*, offered through State fire training networks.
- All emergency service officers, including those who may serve on a Type 4 or Type 5 IMT should take the following courses or their equivalent:
 - USFA’s *Introduction to Command and General Staff* (self-study)
 - USFA’s *Command and General Staff Functions in the Incident Command System* (6-day class offered through USFA’s National Fire Academy)

- USFA's *Introduction to Unified Command for Multi-Agency and Catastrophic Incidents* (2-day class offered through State fire training networks)
- Assigned members of a Type 3 IMT (appointed by a metropolitan, regional, or state authority having jurisdiction) should meet the requirements of a member of a Type 4 or Type 5 IMT and:
 - Attend (as a team) USFA's new *All-Hazards Incident Management Team* course (60-hours, on-site customized course)
 - Attend position-specific training provided through NWCG
 - Participate in coordinated "shadowing" at a major incident with experienced Command and General Staff members from a Type 1 or 2 IMT

USFA has agreed that, for rapid development of Type 3 IMTs, assigned members who have current training and/or experience in Command and General Staff positions may not need to complete all of the training requirements of a Type 4 or 5 IMT.

"The operations of IMTs are highly dependant on the local community needs, available resources, and the level of training/experience," said Charlie Dickinson, Deputy United States Fire Administrator and former chief of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire. "Local jurisdictions establish, train, and control Type 4 and Type 5 IMTs at their respective levels. Type 1 and Type 2 IMTs are currently in existence at the federal level. The Focus Group identified the need to develop Type 3 IMTs for regional or state level incidents." USFA and USFS will work together in delivering training to develop these IMTs.

Several states and metropolitan areas already utilize the equivalent of a Type 3 IMT. The Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) recently completed the development of IMTs through training and shadowing in partnership with USFS. Departments in the National Capital Region, through the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments Fire Chiefs and Senior Operations Committees, are preparing to undertake the USFA Type 3 training regimen early in 2004. Several states and other metropolitan areas are making plans to develop Type 3 IMTs in 2004 as well.

"USFA has long been the Federal government's harbinger of ICS training for local fire and emergency service personnel," said R. David Paulison, U. S. Fire Administrator and former chief of Metro Dade Fire-Rescue in Florida. "Through NFA or State fire training networks, no less than twelve different courses provide instruction on various applications of ICS during different types or sizes of incidents, including high rise fires, structural collapses, hazardous materials incidents, multiple casualty

incidents, wildland/urban interface fires, and natural and manmade disasters.” USFA courses typically use exercises and simulations to provide practical applications for students; many courses at NFA provide computer-generated simulation experiences through USFA’s National Incident Simulation Laboratory. USFA also provides web-based and computer-based ICS-related training and simulations, available through their website, www.usfa.fema.gov.

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