WISCOM Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Index #	201.00
Type	Policy
Subject	NIMS-Compliant Communication
Approved	Approved by the SSMG on December 22, 2011
Revised	N/A

Purpose

This document ensures National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance for communications on the Wisconsin Interoperable System for Communications (WISCOM). All members utilizing interoperable talkgroups shall comply with the NIMS and Plain Language Alert. This alert replaces the NIMS and Plain Language Alert issued on December 19, 2006.

Scope

The policy addresses all communications by members on the WISCOM and compliance with the NIMS plain language alert.

Reporting Requirements

There are no regular reporting requirements.

Policy

A. The use of plain language in emergency response is a matter of public safety, especially the safety of first responders and those affected by the incident. It is critical that all local responders, as well as those coming into the impacted area from other jurisdictions and other states as well as the federal government, know and utilize commonly established operational structures, terminology, policies and procedures. This is what NIMS and the Incident Command System (ICS) are all about—achieving interoperability across agencies, jurisdictions and disciplines.

B. To further assist with plain language implementation, DHS released the *Plain Language Guide – Making the Transition from Ten Codes to Plain Language* in July 2008. The guide represents a first step in a DHS' long-term commitment to help jurisdictions move towards the adoption of plain language. It assists emergency responders in making the transition from the use of "10-codes" to "plain language" during radio communication by explaining how plain language improves interoperability between agencies, explains the value in using plain language, and provides advice regarding the efforts, resources, and key actions to implement plain language in a State, territory, region, or agency. Developed with emergency responder input, the guide provides a four-phased approach to the transition process, as well as best practices and lessons learned from related efforts.

C. The *Plain Language Guide – Making the Transition from Ten Codes to Plain Language* is available at www.safecomprogram.gov under "highlights". We are currently collecting additional lessons

learned or proven practices for transitioning to plain language. If you have related information you would like to share, please contact the Office of Emergency Communications at oec@hq.dhs.gov.

D. *Additional background:* While the NIMS Integration Center does not require plain language for internal operations, it strongly encourages it, as it is important to practice every day terminology and procedures that will need to be used in emergency incidents and disasters.

1. It is required that plain language be used for multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction and multi-discipline events, such as major disasters and exercises.

2. Beginning in FY 2006, federal preparedness grant funding was contingent on the use of plain language in incidents requiring assistance from responders from other agencies, jurisdictions, and functional disciplines. Accordingly, the use of 10-codes in daily operations did not result in the loss of federal preparedness funds.

3. The importance of using plain language was further documented in the National Emergency Communications Plan (http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/natlemergencycommplan/) and noted as an FY2008 Compliance Objective of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).