



National Incident Management System Guideline for Mutual Aid

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1 Introduction

2 1. Purpose

3 Mutual aid agreements establish the terms under which one party sends resources—personnel,
4 teams, facilities, equipment and/or supplies—to another party. Mutual aid agreements provide a
5 means for jurisdictions to augment their resources when needed for high-demand incidents,
6 because most jurisdictions do not maintain sufficient resource levels to handle extreme events
7 independently.

8 Mutual aid agreements can support all mission areas; can be established before, during or after
9 incidents; and can be between all levels of government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and
10 the private sector. Mutual aid does not include direct Federal assistance or Federal response
11 assistance provided under other department-/agency-specific authorities (e.g., the National Oil and
12 Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan).¹ Details regarding assistance will differ based on
13 agency and incident.

14 The National Incident Management System Guideline for Mutual Aid (Guideline) supplements the
15 Resource Management component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) by
16 providing guidance on different types of mutual aid agreements, the key elements of a mutual aid
17 agreement and the key elements of mutual aid operational plans used for implementation.

18 This Guideline does not provide legal authority or direction and does not supersede applicable legal
19 authorities and constraints of the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Jurisdictional chief executives,
20 department or agency heads, governors, tribal leaders, or private sector executives should consult
21 with applicable legal authorities before entering into a mutual aid agreement or compact.

22 Jurisdictions can develop mutual aid agreements to address potential shortfalls and capability gaps
23 identified through capability assessments, gaps analyses and improvement plans following trainings
24 and exercises. Jurisdictions can work with partners to establish mutual aid agreements as part of
25 their preparedness actions. The mutual aid network—an integrated nationwide network of mutual aid
26 systems—enhances the Nation’s overall preparedness and readiness by allowing jurisdictions and
27 organizations to account for, order and mobilize outside resources efficiently and effectively.

¹ Direct Federal Assistance (44 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 206.208) refers to when a state or local government requests that a Federal agency accomplish emergency work and/or debris removal because it lacks the capability. Such assistance is subject to the cost-sharing provisions and eligibility criteria. State or local governments submit requests for assistance to the appropriate FEMA Regional Administrator. If the request is approved, a mission assignment will be issued to the appropriate Federal agency.

28 **2. Background**

29 Since the Guideline was last published in 2017, national stakeholders have developed and
30 implemented new best practices, strategies, and resources for mutual aid agreements. Maintaining
31 up-to-date mutual aid guidance plays an integral role in the standardization of mutual aid processes
32 across jurisdictions. Mutual aid can ensure that FEMA lifelines are addressed with adequate
33 resources. The Guideline has been expanded to include impacts and lessons learned from the
34 COVID-19 pandemic on mutual aid operations, acknowledge legal liabilities for parties in a mutual
35 aid agreement, add special considerations for underserved communities, highlight the importance of
36 a common operating picture, and incorporate guidance for virtual mutual aid delivery in order to
37 provide support in alignment with FEMA lifelines.

38 **3. Applicability and Scope**

39 For the scope and applicability of this document, please refer to the “Applicability and Scope” section
40 of NIMS.²

41 **4. Document Management and Maintenance**

42 The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Integration Center (NIC) is
43 responsible for the management and maintenance of this document. Comments and feedback from
44 stakeholders regarding this document should be directed to FEMA NIC at FEMA-NIMS@fema.dhs.gov.

² NIMS, <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/nims>.

45 Types of Mutual Aid Agreements

46 Mutual aid agreements establish the terms under which assistance is sent between two or more
47 entities including different states, municipalities, Tribal Nations, jurisdictions within a state, and even
48 with and between private sector entities, NGOs and other whole community partners. These
49 agreements facilitate access to potentially needed resources, both prior to and following incidents or
50 planned events.³

51 When reviewing, revising and developing new mutual aid agreements, emergency managers should
52 consider resources and capabilities across the whole community and ensure compliance with
53 pertinent laws and ordinances.

54 There are several types of mutual aid agreements and jurisdictions may need to establish different
55 types of agreements with different partners to ensure they are able to access sufficient resources to
56 meet anticipated needs.

57 1. Local Automatic Aid

58 Local automatic aid agreements permit the automatic dispatch and response of requested resources
59 without incident-specific approvals or consideration of entity boundaries. These agreements are
60 usually basic contracts between or among neighboring local entities and are used under conditions
61 when time is of the essence to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate property damage
62 following an incident. Some entities refer to these as “Closest Resources” agreements and they are
63 common where jurisdictions are intermingled.⁴ The deployment of automatic aid is often
64 automatically dispatched from the closest entity regardless of jurisdictional boundaries through a
65 centralized dispatcher. Where used, it is important that local dispatch centers are aware of the
66 agreements so that they know which resources to dispatch. It is also recommended that use of these
67 agreements be included in joint training and/or exercises.

68 Examples:

- 69 ▪ Local first responders may routinely send emergency services to a nearby Federal facility that
70 does not have organic capabilities. This agreement may also include a Federal entity providing
71 automatic response.
- 72 ▪ In western states where wildland and structural fires are common, fire protection support is
73 automatically dispatched from the closest fire department regardless of jurisdictional boundaries

³ In this document, “incident” includes planned events as well as emergencies and/or disasters of all kinds and sizes. See the Glossary for additional information.

⁴ <https://www.emacweb.org/index.php/tribal-nation-emac-integration> Local entities may include nearby governments (including Federal Government installations), private sector facilities, NGOs and faith-based organizations.

74 through a centralized dispatcher. The local automatic aid agreement is a regional partnership
75 and relied upon for daily operations.

- 76 ▪ A fire department from a military installation may respond to an automobile accident outside of
77 its gate because it is the closest appropriate emergency resource, even though the area where
78 the accident occurred is outside the fire department’s area of responsibility.
- 79 ▪ A large municipality may automatically dispatch a hazardous material response as part of an
80 automatic aid agreement with neighboring communities that do not possess the same
81 specialized equipment and resources required to respond to hazardous materials release.

82 **2. Local Mutual Aid**

83 Local mutual aid agreements between neighboring jurisdictions or organizations involve a formal
84 request for assistance and generally cover a larger geographic area than local automatic mutual aid
85 agreements do. Under these agreements, local resources may be used to assist Federal
86 departments and agencies in fulfilling their missions under special circumstances, and vice versa.
87 Incorporating private sector, NGO and community-/faith-based organizations into the mutual aid
88 network provides parties with access to significant additional resources.

89 Example:

- 90 ▪ Utility companies, whether privately or publicly owned, typically enter into mutual aid agreements
91 with local communities. While “utilities” can refer to a wide range of services provided to the
92 public, common utility mutual aid agreements provide for electrical, water, wastewater and other
93 services, such as cybersecurity assistance. Emergency aid and assistance may be provided in
94 the form of personnel, equipment, materials and other associated services, as necessary.
- 95 ▪ Post-disaster building safety inspectors from other jurisdictions may be called to assist in
96 response and recovery operations despite the disaster area being outside of the inspectors’ area
97 of responsibility.
- 98 ▪ Cyber units may assist neighboring jurisdictions in creating more resilient networks pre-disaster
99 in an effort to mitigate damage.
- 100 ▪ Neighboring health departments often share information and experience with one another to
101 assist in fighting public health issues.

102 **3. Regional or Statewide Mutual Aid**

103 Regional mutual aid agreements can be made below the state level between multiple jurisdictions
104 and are often sponsored by a council of governments or a similar regional body. Entities from a
105 regional mutual aid agreement can assist local entities that have been on scene for an extended
106 period of time.

107 Statewide or intrastate mutual aid agreements are often coordinated through the state and
108 incorporate both state and local governmental and nongovernmental assets in an attempt to
109 increase preparedness statewide. Statewide assistance significantly increases the number of
110 entities supporting the incident response and recovery. This approach can help reduce the number
111 of local and jurisdiction-to-jurisdiction mutual aid agreements. In some instances, state law requires
112 participation in an intrastate mutual aid system.

113 Examples:

- 114 ▪ The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) developed a ***National Fire Service Intrastate***
115 ***Mutual Aid System (IMAS)*** that ties local fire districts and departments into statewide mutual aid
116 networks. IAFC uses the Mutual Aid Net tool to manage and dispatch all-hazard resources,
117 individually or through mission-ready packages (MRP), in support of IMAS.

- 118 ▪ The ***Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)*** is a structured, planned mutual aid system for
119 deploying fire, rescue and emergency medical services personnel in a multijurisdictional and/or
120 multi-agency response within a state. Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and parts of Missouri
121 and Iowa use MABAS. MABAS connects fire, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency
122 management, and special operations teams in hazardous materials, technical rescue,
123 subsurface ice/water rescue, fire investigations, incident management, urban search and rescue
124 and station backfill coverage with standby firefighting and EMS resources through mutual aid
125 requests.

126 4. Interstate Mutual Aid – Prior to or Without a 127 Declaration

128 Jurisdictions operating under agreements that expressly require some form of declaration may need
129 to establish other means of acquiring support, if such support is needed prior to or in the absence of
130 such a declaration (e.g., in preparation for a special event or to position assets in anticipation of a
131 hurricane). Since EMAC does not apply in those situations, jurisdictions need separate interstate
132 agreements for such incidents or planned events.

133 Several approaches accomplish this objective, including neighbor-to-neighbor aid. Many states have
134 enacted legislation to enable and support local interstate mutual aid agreements. Tribal Nations also
135 enter into agreements to assist fellow Tribal Nations, states, or local governments.

136 Example:

- 137 ▪ The Mid-America Mutual Aid Consortium supports interstate mutual aid for emergency situations
138 that do not result in a state or local declaration of emergency or disaster. The consortium helps
139 parties recognize out-of-state professional licenses, certifications, or other permits when the
140 state, or a county, city, village, township, special district, or other political subdivision or unit of
141 local government, requests mutual aid from jurisdictions outside of their state. The consortium
142 also provides certain persons with immunity from civil actions when acting pursuant to mutual

143 aid agreements and maintains employee benefits and protections. Authority to participate is
144 provided by inter-local agreements condoned through each participating state’s statutory
145 authorities.

146 ■ The Olympic Regional Tribal-Public Health Collaboration and Mutual Aid Agreement is made and
147 entered into by the signatory Health Department or signatory Health District, or signatory County
148 within the State of Washington that operates a public health department or division within its
149 county government, Members confront numerous threats to public health and voluntarily aid and
150 assist other members through public health resources.⁵

151 5. Interstate Mutual Aid – After Declaration

152 Out-of-state assistance through formal state-to-state agreements that support the response and
153 recovery effort. Interstate mutual aid can be established through various types of vehicles, such as
154 interstate compacts and agreements, Federal agreements and sub-geographic plans. Many states
155 have legislation to support these agreements.

156 An example of an interstate mutual aid compact is the Emergency Management Assistance Compact
157 (EMAC), which is administered by the National Emergency Management Association. State-to-state
158 assistance through EMAC supports from response through to recovery.

Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)

EMAC is a congressionally ratified agreement that provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid during governor-declared states of emergency or disaster. Through EMAC, officials in a disaster-affected state can request and receive assistance (including personnel, equipment and commodities) from other member states quickly and efficiently, thereby resolving four key issues: tort liability and immunity, license reciprocity, workers’ compensation and reimbursement. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have adopted EMAC. Tribal Nations cannot participate in EMACs due to statutory exclusion. However, Tribal Nations can establish mutual aid agreements as a Providing or Requesting Entity with surrounding jurisdictions or with other Tribal Nations outside of the EMAC construct.

159 States can use intergovernmental agreements, memoranda of agreement/understanding, intrastate
160 legislation, or gubernatorial executive orders to deploy Tribal Nation personnel, private resources and
161 volunteers. States are able to leverage other agreements using EMAC as the deployment
162 mechanism; however, EMAC does not cover interstate mutual aid before an emergency or disaster
163 declaration is made by the affected state.

⁵ <https://www.emacweb.org/index.php/tribal-nation-emac-integration>

164 Private sector assets may be able to deploy via EMAC through the use of supplemental agreements
165 where allowable by state law. Non-state assets utilize enabling mechanisms (legislation,
166 memorandum of understanding [MOU], memorandum of agreement [MOA], governor executive
167 order, intergovernmental agreements, or other) to deploy through EMAC. Local governments can also
168 submit EMAC requests through state government using channels outlined in state-level guidance.

169 **6. Tribal Nation Mutual Aid – After Declaration**

170 Mutual aid agreements or MOUs are essential mechanisms for facilitating the sharing of resources
171 and assistance between different jurisdictions during and after incidents. These agreements help
172 ensure a coordinated response and efficient allocation of resources. When an incident occurs and a
173 jurisdiction does not have enough of its own resources to respond adequately, it may request
174 assistance from another jurisdiction through a mutual aid agreement.

175 The FEMA Public Assistance and Program Policy Guide (PAPPG) addresses situations when there is
176 no written agreement at the time of the disaster or when an agreement does not specify costs for
177 resources: *“The entities may verbally agree on the resources to be provided and on the terms,
178 conditions, and costs of such assistance. The agreement should be consistent with past practices
179 for mutual aid between the entities. For example, if the Requesting Entity does not normally
180 reimburse a Providing Entity for its costs, it should not agree to do so specifically for the declared
181 incident. Prior to funding, the Requesting Entity must document the verbal agreement in writing,
182 have it executed by an official of each entity with the authority to request and provide assistance,
183 and submit it to FEMA (preferably within 30 days of the Applicant’s Briefing).”*

184 As part of implementing the 2022 – 2026 FEMA National Tribal Strategy, FEMA is now clarifying that
185 such agreements are available to Tribal Nations in the same way they are available to state and local
186 jurisdictions. When the Requesting and Providing Entities do not have a pre-existing written
187 agreement, or if the existing agreement is silent on matters of reimbursement, they are not
188 precluded from engaging in mutual aid activities eligible for reimbursement through Public
189 Assistance. In such situations, these entities can enter into a verbal agreement to define the
190 resources to be provided and to establish the terms, conditions, and costs of the assistance to be
191 rendered. This allows flexibility in responding to the incident's specific needs.

192 The agreement reached between the Requesting Entity and the Providing Entity should be consistent
193 with the historical practices and protocols for mutual aid. The verbal agreement must be codified in
194 writing and formally adopted by officials from both entities. This written record should outline the
195 specifics of the agreement, including the resources requested/provided, the terms, conditions, and
196 cost arrangements. Once the verbal agreement is documented and executed, it should be submitted
197 with the project application in which the Requesting Entity is seeking reimbursement through FEMA.

198 The PAPPG provides a list of documentation that the Requesting Entity should submit to support the
199 costs claimed under the mutual aid agreement. The documentation list is not exhaustive and
200 therefore FEMA is clarifying that any documentation that provides details of services requested and
201 received, information about labor, equipment, and supplies may be used to support this requirement

202 for eligibility. Some examples include letters, memos, written agreements, meeting minutes, emails,
203 purchase orders, and invoices certifying to work and costs.

204 7. International Mutual Aid

205 International mutual aid agreements are a legal means through which jurisdictions can share
206 resources across an international border. Bilateral and multilateral agreements are negotiated and
207 managed through Federal agencies and/or such agreements are managed directly between U.S.
208 states/regions and their international counterparts.

209 FEMA's International Assistance System Concept of Operations establishes policies and procedures
210 for managing international assistance for domestic disasters declared under the Stafford Act. The
211 Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and/or the authorities of the sending departments/agencies govern
212 U.S. foreign assistance.

213 Examples:

- 214 ▪ The ***State and Province Emergency Management Assistance Memorandum of Agreement***
215 ***(SPEMAMA)*** is an agreement ratified by the United States and Canada that allows for
216 participating jurisdictions from each country to enact or adopt it. SPEMAMA is open to all 50
217 states and U.S. territories, and to all 10 provinces and three territories in Canada. It provides a
218 system and a set of processes to systematically and rapidly deploy mutual aid resources among
219 participating jurisdictions.

- 220 ▪ The **Northern Emergency Management Assistance Compact (NEMAC)** is an agreement that
221 facilitates cross border emergency management assistance through mutual aid. The agreement
222 allows jurisdictions, to include any or all of the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan,
223 Minnesota, Montana, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, to participate in
224 cross-border mutual assistance for preparedness and response with any or all of the Canadian
225 provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan. The agreement can be used for any
226 capability and capacity that one member state or province has that can be shared with another.

227 Key Elements of Mutual Aid 228 Agreements

229 Mutual aid agreements can vary considerably from agreement to agreement. The participating
230 parties determine the content and structure of an agreement or compact. An organization or
231 jurisdiction may enter into multiple agreements with varying formats and content. Common
232 terminology, formats, and writing in plain English help clarify expectations, promote unity of effort
233 and expedite mutual aid efforts.

234 When establishing mutual aid agreements or compacts, jurisdictions and organizations should
235 address the following key elements to improve the understanding of the commitment, scope and
236 general procedures for all parties.

237 1. Purpose and Scope

238 Identify the agreement's conditions, length and general legal scope or effect, such as the intent to
239 bind parties. Present the reason for the agreement and identify the parties, the types of services
240 addressed and any applicable mutual aid service limitations. Organizations often specify whether the
241 agreement's intent is to send resources for declared disasters or surge capacity prior to a disaster
242 declaration.

243 2. Benefits

244 Outline the economic, logistical, or other benefits that the mutual aid agreement may provide to the
245 parties entering into the agreement. Because owning and maintaining all of the resources needed to
246 respond to extreme or high-demand incidents is cost-prohibitive for most communities, entering into
247 mutual aid agreements provides economic and logistical efficiencies to support any gaps in
248 resources and capability.

249 3. Authorities

250 Specifically state the legal basis for the parties to enter into the mutual aid agreement. This may
251 include the state laws, local ordinances, Tribal Nation laws and resolutions, regulations or other
252 applicable authorities. This section should ideally include authorities for both the sending and
253 receiving parties. It is important to recognize that one party's authority to provide assistance may not
254 automatically confer the ability to accept that assistance by the other party. This section should
255 outline all parties' authorities for clarity.

256 **4. Definitions**

257 Define key terms in the agreement to ensure all parties share a common vocabulary, especially any
258 terms that are specific or unique to the circumstances of the contract. If either party's cited authority
259 includes statutory definitions the parties should specify which set of definitions will be used.

260 **5. Governance Structure and Operations Oversight**

261 The governance section should specify who is responsible for overseeing the agreement and how
262 those personnel communicate policies and procedures to guide the agreement's implementation
263 and operation. Establishing a clear leader's intent and providing clarity about the governance
264 structure can expedite decision making, reduce the time required to request assistance and ensure
265 all parties understand the chain of command.

266 Parties to the agreement designate personnel to implement and operate the mutual aid agreement
267 terms. Examples of personnel actions in the governance section include identifying who will
268 complete the following tasks:

- 269 ▪ Develop and approve procedures for implementation, operation and documentation;
- 270 ▪ Develop and approve complaint procedures, methods and resolution;
- 271 ▪ Provide personnel with procedures and training; and
- 272 ▪ Conduct joint exercises for mutual aid requests, deployment, operations and demobilization.

273 **6. Recognition of Licensure and Certifications**

274 Identify current and active licenses and certifications that qualify individuals to perform specific
275 duties (e.g., physicians, emergency medical technicians [EMT], paramedics, or nurses) and ensure
276 receiving parties recognize licensure and/or certification across geopolitical boundaries. Mutual aid
277 agreements that cross geopolitical borders should reconcile that practitioners licensed in one
278 political jurisdiction retain the authorization to work at the level of their license or certification in
279 other political jurisdictions as a part of the response.

280 **7. Tort Liability and Indemnification**

281 Specify how parties will address tort liability. For mutual aid purposes, indemnifying the person or
282 jurisdiction or holding them harmless is a way to address liability concerns.

283 Examples:

- 284 ▪ The mutual aid agreement may specify that agents of the party rendering aid in another
285 jurisdiction under the agreement are considered agents of the requesting party for liability
286 purposes.
- 287 ▪ The parties may add information on the use of liability waivers and insurance for comprehensive
288 liability, personal injury, workers' compensation and professional liability.
- 289 ▪ The parties may add information on policies surrounding volunteers and the protections offered
290 within each jurisdiction.

291 State laws differ on governmental, or sovereign, immunity. State laws also differ on tort claims,
292 volunteer protection, Good Samaritan protection and other incident response factors. Effective
293 mutual aid agreements contain provisions concerning liability and indemnification to protect the
294 parties and responders.

295 **8. Insurance**

296 Address the parties' responsibilities to provide insurance coverage. Many political jurisdictions are
297 self-insured, while private sector organizations tend to carry commercially available insurance.
298 Mutual aid agreements may address who is responsible for providing insurance coverage for
299 personnel, equipment, etc.

300 **9. Protocols for Interoperable Communications**

301 Pre-arranged communication platforms, interoperable technology and procedures are critical for
302 effective execution. Identify the overarching requirement for ensuring the necessary level of voice
303 and data communications.

304 These protocols may include guidance on interoperability channels, data services, backup systems
305 and common alerting protocols that are necessary to establish on the-scene coordination and
306 communications for multijurisdictional or multidisciplinary responses. Identifying common
307 communication protocols in mutual aid agreements is particularly important when integrating mutual
308 aid resources that may not have interoperable systems.

309 **10. Workers' Compensation**

310 Identify if workers' compensation coverage and claims/death benefits are eligible for reimbursement
311 and if so, under what authority. Address how parties will respond to workers' compensation coverage
312 and claims, including those from private sector, NGO and community-/faith-based organization
313 employees and volunteers. The parties may add provisions defining the means for resolving disputes
314 and detailing liability for workers compensation and death benefits.

315 **11. Deployment Notification**

316 It is a best practice to include acceptable deployment notification protocols and documents in
317 mutual aid documents to discourage unrequested resources. This section should address the
318 documentation that will be considered official authorization to deploy, such as orders, an EMAC
319 Resource Support Agreement (RSA) or travel authorizations citing a specific purpose. Having explicit
320 deployment notification will discourage self-deployment of unrequested resources.

321 When responders come to an incident area without being requested, they may interfere with incident
322 management and may place an extra logistical and management burden on an already stressed
323 system by:

- 324 ▪ Creating additional supervisory, logistical and safety needs;
- 325 ▪ Depleting the resources needed to provide continued services to their home community;
- 326 ▪ Complicating resource tracking and accountability,
- 327 ▪ Limiting the access of formally requested resources; and/or
- 328 ▪ Parties should ensure that ordering request number or mission request number should be
329 included for each requested resource.

330 **12. Compensation/Reimbursement**

331 Mutual aid agreements must specify how the receiving party will compensate the sending party. The
332 parties may define how an emergency declaration might impact reimbursement, if certain types of
333 aid are sent with or without reimbursement, and the timeline for submission of the itemized bill and
334 fulfilling payment. This compensation may be provided using the following structures:

- 335 ▪ ***In-kind agreements*** state that the party receiving services will reciprocate by providing the same
336 type of services over time, e.g., resources are sent without reimbursement for the first 12 or 24
337 hours.
- 338 ▪ ***Equity agreements*** state that the parties will exchange equitable services, though not of an in-
339 kind nature. The value of the services exchanged under an equity agreement is equal.
- 340 ▪ ***Reimbursable agreements*** provide the terms of the exchange of services for payment.
341 Agreements specify the costs of various types of services and the payment mechanisms parties
342 will use. In some incidents, sending parties cannot afford to lend their services and resources for
343 extended periods of time without reimbursement.

344 Mutual aid agreements that involve payment often include the following provisions:

- 345 ▪ Conditions that would trigger the start of reimbursable time for resources sent through mutual
346 aid,
- 347 ▪ Eligibility and documentation requirements for expenses that are reimbursable (e.g., a travel
348 reimbursement policy),
- 349 ▪ Jurisdictional or organizational policies related to specific reimbursable costs. Examples of such
350 costs include the following:
 - 351 ▪ Personnel Pay: Total Cost of Compensation (TCC) may include salary, overtime, backfill and other
352 employee-related costs, including insurance, retirement and workers' compensation insurance,
353 which are often addressed in cited policies. Where labor contracts or union agreements affect
354 personnel pay and benefits, agreements should specify that any reimbursements will reflect the
355 most current pay and benefits required by the applicable agreement.
 - 356 ▪ Travel/Transportation: Travel costs usually include airfare, luggage fees, mileage reimbursement,
357 rental vehicles, parking, tolls, fuel (if not included in the equipment rates described below),
358 lodging, meals and transport/shipping costs (bulk items, large equipment and vehicle transport).
359 Travel may include a variety of time intervals. For example, portal to portal when people leave an
360 agency until they return. Some start the clock on check in at the incident.
 - 361 ▪ Equipment Rates: Reimbursement costs for equipment should address hourly or daily usage
362 rates, fuel, maintenance and other commodities (if not included in a flat rate), and costs for loss,
363 damage and repairs to equipment. The sending organization or jurisdiction usually determines
364 these rates or sometimes bases the rates on standardized regional, state, or Federal rates, such
365 as FEMA's equipment rates.
 - 366 ▪ Commodities: These are expendable and durable commodities that often include office supplies,
367 sandbags, dust masks, trash bags, printer paper and batteries.
 - 368 ▪ Administrative Costs: Identify if administrative costs are eligible and under what circumstances.
369 These are the additional costs involved with mobilizing and seeking reimbursement for resources
370 sent. They are typically assessed as a fixed percentage of the total cost being invoiced. These
371 fixed rates vary among organizations but are generally between eight percent and 18 percent.
 - 372 ▪ Other: These are costs that do not fall into one of the above categories (e.g., fees for laundry
373 services, mobile phones, decontamination, medical requirements).

374 It is important that all parties to an agreement identify and understand the documentation
375 requirements for reimbursement. Documentation requirements can vary from agreement to
376 agreement, but the overall requirement for supporting claims is present in all agreements.
377 Insufficient or improper documentation can cause delays in the reimbursement process. Agreements
378 may also have differing processes and requirements for donating the costs of resources through
379 agreements.

380 **13. Termination**

381 Specify how and when parties may terminate the agreement and the notification time period.
382 Documenting this information minimizes cost and risk to all parties.

383 **14. Dispute Resolution**

384 Include methods and timelines for making, processing, and investigating complaints and define the
385 dispute resolution process. This includes how personnel make formal complaints, the adjudication
386 method, timeframes for each step and the implementation of resolution.

387 **15. Modification and Amendment Management**

388 Identify the methods and timelines for the periodic review of the agreement by all parties, the
389 process for parties to propose modifications or amendments to the document, and the process for
390 approving changes.

391 **16. Operational Plan and Procedures Requirements**

392 Specify any requirements concerning the development of a mutual aid operational plan, including
393 procedures, the timeline for completion, and the process for approving and implementing the plan.
394 Typically, this includes procedures for how mutual aid resources and personnel who were mobilized
395 to support an incident or planned event continue under the operational control of their day-to-day
396 leaders. It often also includes details on how the receiving party's existing Incident Command System
397 (ICS) structure integrates resources, forms and personnel, as well as how the receiving party
398 maintains control over the incident and makes organizational and strategic goals and objectives and
399 tactical assignments to the mutual aid resources through the chain of command. Additional
400 guidance on operational planning can be found at EMAC's website at <https://www.emacweb.org>.

401 **17. Supplemental Information Based on Declaration** 402 **Status**

403 Include supplemental information on authorities and procedures that are triggered under governor-
404 declared disasters, such as provisions to:

- 405 ▪ Implement intergovernmental agreements, memoranda of agreement/understanding, intrastate
406 legislation, or gubernatorial executive orders to deploy Tribal Nation personnel, private resources
407 and volunteers;
- 408 ▪ Incorporate resources that provide form and structure to interstate mutual aid during governor-
409 declared states of emergency; and/or

- 410 ▪ Request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently, resolving four
411 key issues: tort liability and immunity, license reciprocity, workers' compensation and
412 reimbursement.

413 **18. Population Considerations**

414 Disasters can disproportionately impact different populations within a jurisdiction, and it is important
415 for decision makers to understand the demographic composition within their communities who may
416 require additional assistance during and after a disaster. Populations that may be disproportionately
417 affected include (but are not limited to):

- 418 ▪ Historically underserved populations and communities (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, low-income
419 individuals)
- 420 ▪ Tribal populations;
- 421 ▪ Individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities, behavioral health challenges or access and
422 functional needs;
- 423 ▪ Elderly populations, particularly those in assisted living or nursing homes;
- 424 ▪ Unhoused or migrant populations; and
- 425 ▪ Geographically isolated or rural populations, in addition to people, include animal/livestock
426 populations as well. These may include farms, ranches, animal shelters and medical research
427 laboratories that have laboratory animals for testing.

428 These groups may require additional resources or services during disaster operations. Parties to
429 mutual aid agreements should ensure everyone within the community has access to the resources
430 and services they need. Mutual aid agreements can include language that ensures resources and
431 services are available for underserved communities during and after a disaster. Including these
432 communities explicitly in a mutual aid agreement can help ensure resources are allocated to provide
433 assistance to all those impacted by disaster.

434 Key Elements of Mutual Aid 435 Operational Plans and Procedural 436 Requirements

437 Operational plans support mutual aid agreements and guide the sending and receiving parties in
438 managing and sending effective mutual aid. These plans are essential to creating and maintaining a
439 common operating picture, and identifying specific resources, tasks, personnel, asset allocations,
440 roles, responsibilities, integration and actions that mutual aid participants execute respective to their
441 assignments.

442 Mutual aid operational plans:

- 443 ▪ Supplement mutual aid agreements, either as an appendix to the agreement or as a separate
444 document;
- 445 ▪ Identify specific resources, tasks, personnel, asset allocations, roles, responsibilities, integration
446 and actions that mutual aid participants execute respective to their assignments; and
- 447 ▪ Help requesting or receiving parties manage mutual aid assets during a planned event or
448 following an incident.

449 The following subsections present key considerations and components of effective mutual aid
450 operational plans.

451 1. Disaster Lifecycle

452 Mutual aid can take many forms and can be present at any stage in the disaster lifecycle.
453 Jurisdictions are encouraged to engage in mutual aid during Mitigation, Preparedness, Response
454 and Recovery depending on their individual needs and with a focus on community lifelines as
455 defined in the FEMA Incident Stabilization Guide.^{6,7} The following are ways in which mutual aid can
456 aid jurisdictions during the disaster lifecycle.

457 1.1. Creating and Maintaining a Common Operating Picture

458 A common operating picture (COP) allows all levels of incident management and all responding
459 jurisdictions to maintain real-time situational awareness. The creation and maintenance of a COP
460 allows every level of jurisdiction to conduct their operations more efficiently. Sharing data, using

⁶ Community Lifelines Implementation Toolkit: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/lifelines-toolkit>

⁷ FEMA Incident Stabilization Guide: <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/IncidentStabilizationGuide.pdf>

461 integrated communications systems and practicing cooperative information management allow for a
462 more unified response with all jurisdictions acting on the same shared intelligence. Parties to the
463 agreement may establish expectations and protocol for creating and maintaining a COP. There are a
464 number of commonly used software applications which are available to facilitate a shared COP.

465 **1.2. Operationalization**

466 Jurisdictions engaged in mutual aid must operationalize plans, policies and information through
467 crisis action in order to best deliver aid. A common culture of planning between jurisdictions is an
468 effective way to ensure that plans effectively transition into action during a disaster. Effective mutual
469 aid requires that all jurisdictions engaged in the agreement understand how to operationalize their
470 plans and utilize a COP throughout the disaster lifecycle. FEMA notes the importance of maintaining
471 an accurate COP for stabilizing community lifeline service—is highest priority when responding to
472 disasters. Lifelines provide a common lens which all responders can use to assess whether critical
473 lifesaving and life-sustaining services are disrupted and, if so, which core capabilities are required to
474 provide those services.

475 **2. Implementation, Schedule, Training and Exercises**

476 The mutual aid operational plan should include a schedule of training and exercises to validate the
477 concepts and actions in the mutual aid operational plan prior to implementation. The AHJ's legal and
478 financial departments should be involved in the training and exercise processes to ensure that no
479 parties have conflicting legal requirements. Mutual aid-based exercises provide responders the
480 opportunity to practice their procedures and responsibilities. Exercises test operational plan design,
481 concept and implementation in addition to testing the communications, logistics and administrative
482 structure needed to support the plan.

483 Sound operational plans, coupled with training and opportunities to exercise plan components, help
484 build a solid foundation for implementing mutual aid. Listing scheduled training or exercises, as well
485 as learning objectives for each, in an operational plan is a best practice. In addition, the operational
486 plan should list any requirement for minimum training standards between the parties.

487 This section should include an implementation schedule for individual and joint training and
488 validation exercises.

489 **3. Identifying Mutual Aid Resources**

490 Entities use various mechanisms to organize, develop, train and exercise certain response and
491 recovery resources prior to an emergency or disaster. These mechanisms are developed by mutual
492 aid system managers ahead of time for anticipated mission requirements, as well as on an ad hoc
493 basis. Managers assemble existing teams and organize them based on a mission's specific
494 requirements.

Mission Ready Packages

Mission Ready Packages (MRP) are a specific mechanism that uses NIMS resource typing criteria to describe expected mission parameters and select the resources. MRP details typically include a statement of the mission capability needed, descriptions of conditions that might impact the mission, required logistical support (including the space needed to stage the resources and sustain them while completing the mission) and the estimated cost of providing the resources.

Many states have MRP templates. Entities looking to develop their own MRPs can reach out to other states or can leverage MRP templates and tools on the EMAC website.¹ If using MRPs, it is a best practice for an operational plan to identify general protocols or procedures for using the NIMS resource typing definitions, inventory systems and standardized templates for MRPs.

495
496 Typically, resources are identified in accordance with NIMS resource typing. These organizational
497 mechanisms are important to mutual aid because they allow rapid identification, location, request,
498 order and tracking of specific resources quickly and effectively during an emergency. This structure
499 reduces the span of control and minimizes incident management and communication complexities.
500 For example, all parties should know that an Emergency Medical Task Force, Type 1, consists of an
501 operational grouping of five EMS resource teams with common communications and a leader,
502 including vehicles, staff, equipment and supplies.

503 4. Inventorying Resources

504 Include procedures to identify the immediate and future resource needs and priorities of the
505 incident, including what and how much is needed, where and when it is needed, and who will be
506 receiving or using it, based on incident response experience and specific damage assessments.

507 A variety of sources can provide resource requirements, depending on the nature of the emergency
508 and the public and private sector entities and NGOs operating in the affected areas. Appropriate
509 planning requires that jurisdictions communicate potential resource needs requirements in advance
510 of any incident to prospective resource senders. To assist in this process, maintaining an inventory of
511 resources “owned” by parties in the agreement is a best practice. This inventory should include
512 specifics on capabilities, maintenance requirements, operational status and deployment
513 information. The inventory may be based on the NIMS Resource Typing Definitions, the Incident
514 Resource Inventory System and standardized templates for EMAC MRPs. Specific details may include
515 the following:

- 516 ▪ **Name:** The unique name of the resource.
- 517 ▪ **Aliases:** Other names for the resource, whether formal or informal. These can be radio call signs,
518 license numbers, nicknames, or anything else that may help users identify the resource.

- 519 ▪ **Resource Typing Definition or Job Title:** The resource typing definition (kind and type) or job title
520 that applies to the resource. This can be either a standard NIMS resource typing definition or job
521 title/position qualification or a local, state, or Tribal Nation definition.
- 522 ▪ **Home Location:** The resource’s permanent storage location, base, or office, including the home
523 location’s associated latitude/longitude and U.S. National Grid coordinates, to ensure
524 interoperability with mapping and decision support tools.
- 525 ▪ **Point of Contact:** Individuals and relevant information for those who are points of contact for
526 communication related to the resource and their relevant information.
- 527 ▪ **Owner:** The agency, tribe, company, person, or other entity that owns the resource.
- 528 ▪ **Manufacturer/Model:** The manufacturer, model name and serial number for equipment.
- 529 ▪ **Contracts:** Purchase, lease, rental, or maintenance agreements or other financial agreements
530 associated with the resource.
- 531 ▪ **Certifications:** Documentation that validates the official qualifications, certifications, or licenses
532 associated with the resource.
- 533 ▪ **Deployment Information:** The information needed to request a resource, which includes:
 - 534 ▪ **Minimum Lead Time (in hours):** The minimum time a resource needs to prepare for deployment.
 - 535 ▪ **Maximum Deployment Time (in days):** The maximum time a resource can be deployed or involved
536 in a response before its owner needs to pull it back for maintenance, recovery, or resupply.
 - 537 ▪ **Restrictions:** Any restrictions placed on the resource use, capabilities, etc.
 - 538 ▪ **Reimbursement Process:** Any special information regarding the reimbursement process.
 - 539 ▪ **Release and Return Instructions:** Any information regarding the release and return of the
540 resource.
 - 541 ▪ **Sustainability Needs:** Any information regarding resources or criteria for maintaining a capability
542 during a deployment.

543 **5. Tracking Resources**

544 To be effectively implemented, it is recommended that parties to the plan develop systems for “real
545 time” tracking and communicating about resources available in the event mutual aid becomes
546 necessary. The following information should be maintained and communicated to all parties to the
547 agreement:

- 548 ▪ **Status:** The status of the resources listed in the plan (available, assigned, or out of service).

549 ▪ **Mutual Aid Readiness:** Whether the listed resource is ready for deployment or pre-positioned
550 under mutual aid.

551 ▪ **Present Location:** The resource’s current location, base, office, or deployment assignment, which
552 may include the present location’s associated latitude/longitude and/or U.S. National Grid
553 coordinates, to ensure interoperability with mapping and decision support tools.

554 **6. Mobilizing Resources (Request, Dispatch and** 555 **Response)**

556 Describe the process for making resource requests, dispatches and responses through mutual aid,
557 such as formal requests from emergency operations center to emergency operations center for
558 specific resources, or emergency-in-progress notifications by dispatchers regarding law enforcement
559 pursuit of suspects spanning jurisdictional borders.

560 An Incident Commander makes initial and ongoing assessments of resource requirements and
561 requests additional resources as needed with specific guidance on exact reporting location (e.g., U.S.
562 National Grid, latitude and longitude). Parties can request resources individually by type, or in
563 aggregate in predefined task forces, strike teams, or MRPs. It is a best practice to describe the
564 process for requesting mutual aid, evaluating offers, agreeing to operational terms and indicating
565 how support (e.g., food, fuel, lodging, repair parts) will be provided to resources as part of the
566 operational plan. Specific details may include:

- 567 ▪ Response area;
- 568 ▪ Incident check-in location;
- 569 ▪ Specific assignments (e.g., position, team designation);
- 570 ▪ Reporting time;
- 571 ▪ Communications instructions (e.g., incident frequencies);
- 572 ▪ Special support requirements (e.g., facilities, equipment transportation and off-loading); and
- 573 ▪ Travel arrangements (if needed), including authorization for air, rental car, lodging, meals and
574 incidental expenses.

575 **7. Receiving Resources**

576 Describe the processes and standards for receiving and checking in resources sent under the
577 agreement. Specific details may include:

- 578 ▪ Verifying that the resource was requested;

- 579 ▪ Checking the credentials of the resource and validating that the resource meets the
580 qualifications and/or certifications requested;
- 581 ▪ Inspecting vehicles, equipment or other resources for any damage and documenting any
582 supplies or non-expendable equipment;
- 583 ▪ Collecting information needed for completing Incident Action Plans and other incident
584 documentation, i.e., names and contact information for team, crew or equipment supervisors;
- 585 ▪ Notification to the sending organization that the resource has been received.

586 **8. Mutual Aid Delivery**

587 Describe the delivery method of the support the mutual aid partner is sending. Aid can be delivered
588 in person or virtually. Virtual aid can be a useful tool when physical deployment is not possible or not
589 necessary. Parties to the agreement can identify and establish resource expectations, virtual aid
590 requirements, identify when virtual aid would be possible and when physical deployment would be
591 necessary. Virtual aid can potentially be provided by any entity including federal, state and
592 international jurisdictions.

593 Examples:

- 594 ▪ Virtual aid includes town halls, webinars, public assistance personnel, or support that does not
595 require a physical deployment.

596 **9. Performance Criteria and Metrics**

597 Parties establish performance criteria and metrics during the development of the mutual aid
598 operational plan. Metrics may include size, quantity, essential elements, set of conditions or
599 processes, personnel specifications, equipment and team makeup. During preparation, parties
600 document general performance criteria and metrics in mutual aid agreements and participate in
601 developing resource typing documents. The requesting and sending parties may refine general
602 performance criteria and metrics to specify what is actually needed and/or available. When parties
603 invoke mutual aid, they apply the performance criteria and metrics. Having agreed-upon
604 performance criteria and metrics in a mutual aid operational plan ensures all parties share an
605 understanding of performance expectations of resources.

606 FEMA recommends that plans document general performance criteria and metrics of each resource,
607 unit, or team.

- 608 ▪ Specific criteria may include size, quantity, essential elements, set of conditions or processes,
609 personnel specifications, equipment and team makeup.

- 610 ▪ Metrics are quantitative or qualitative levels against which achievement of a task can be
611 assessed. They describe how much, how well, or how quickly an action should be performed.
612 Metrics vary depending for each resource.

613 **10. Management and Coordination**

614 Provide a protocol for integrating mutual aid resources into the management and coordination
615 structure. This protocol should include specifics on who assumes operational control of mutual aid
616 resources and how the sending party integrates mutual aid resources into the requesting party's
617 command and control structure.

618 **11. Engagement Rules**

619 Describe the rules for how outside resources get to the scene and accomplish missions. These rules
620 may differ for each mobilization as local, regional/metropolitan, state, Tribal Nation, territorial,
621 insular area and Federal requirements and protocols vary. This section should indicate any specific
622 guidelines or standard operating procedures (SOP) for the circumstances and limitations under
623 which the mutual aid resources will operate.

624 **12. Credentialing**

625 Include details on incident personnel credentialing processes. Credentialing means providing
626 documentation, typically badges or identification cards, which verify an individual's identity and
627 qualifications to fulfill an incident-related position. The *NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification*
628 *System* provides the guidance and tools for jurisdictions and organizations to implement their own
629 qualification and certification process in a way that enables them to share resources more
630 seamlessly with other jurisdictions and organizations.⁸ The Guideline includes information that helps
631 the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations and all levels of government establish
632 credentialing protocols and can be used as a resource.

633 Specific details of credentialing may include:

- 634 ▪ ***Applicability.*** Which parties are subject to the credentialing protocols?
- 635 ▪ ***Identification.*** Verification and documentation of personnel identity and qualifications to ensure
636 an appropriate level of trust in the individual's identity and capability.
- 637 ▪ ***Qualifications.*** Details on the minimum qualifications a person must demonstrate for a specific
638 incident position.

⁸ The *NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System* incorporates guidance for credentialing personnel.
(www.fema.gov/national-qualification-system).

- 639 ▪ ***Certification.*** Certification of personnel based on identity vetting and position qualifications.
- 640 ▪ ***Badging.*** Guidelines for issuing an identification card to personnel after parties' complete
641 certification of their identity, qualifications and typing.
- 642 ▪ ***Authorization and Access.*** Such items as order numbers, EMAC RSA, EMAC Mission Order
643 Authorization Forms, or travel authorizations.
- 644 ▪ ***Revocation.*** The revocation of credentials and qualifications if an individual's employment
645 changes or qualifications expire.

646 **13. Health and Safety**

647 The dangers and environmental hazards that responders may encounter during the incident dictate
648 protocols for health and safety. This section should provide health and safety protocols and plans.
649 Provide or reference the types and levels of personal protective equipment, respiratory equipment, or
650 other protection, as well as associated training on that equipment, which are necessary to ensure
651 responder and patient health and safety.

652 **14. Voice and Data Interoperability**

653 Transmission of data in a common format enables sending and receiving parties to share pertinent
654 information. Include information on protocols for voice and data interoperability that allow common
655 interfaces among disparate communications and data management systems. This includes
656 processes for how parties integrate information into a common operating picture and facilitate
657 decision making during mutual aid. Key elements of these SOPs should include a list of
658 communications capabilities, a list of approved frequencies, guidelines for usage and training, and
659 potential cost recovery mechanisms available for use during state- or Federally declared disasters.

660 **15. Documentation and Reporting**

661 Include standardized protocols for documenting and reporting procedures, as well as filing
662 documents and record keeping, to help parties maintain situational awareness and give personnel
663 access to critical information.

664 **16. Demobilizing Resources**

665 A best practice is to include demobilization guidance in mutual aid operational plans to detail the
666 process for demobilizing resources. Specific details may include:

- 667 ▪ Standards for required rest before travel;
- 668 ▪ Inspection of equipment for damage;

- 669 ▪ Documentation of depleted supplies that need to be replaced, or other measures to return the
670 resource to its pre-mobilization state of readiness;
- 671 ▪ Completion of necessary documentation required for reimbursement to occur, including any
672 pending claims; and
- 673 ▪ Notification to the sending organization that the resource is being released to return home,
674 including their mode of travel, travel route and estimated time of arrival (ETA).

675 Appendix A. Glossary

676 **Agency:** A government element with a specific function offering a particular kind of assistance.

677 **Authority Having Jurisdiction:** An entity that has the authority and responsibility for developing,
678 implementing, maintaining and overseeing the qualification process within its organization or
679 jurisdiction. This may be a state or federal agency, training commission, NGO, private sector
680 company, or a Tribal Nation or local agency such as a police, fire, or public works department.

681 **Automatic Aid:** Services sent under an agreement between parties to respond with the nearest
682 available resource to an incident regardless of boundaries. Parties usually establish this type of aid
683 on an in-kind or non-reimbursement basis when sending parties send resources without a receiving
684 party's formal request.

685 **Badging:** Assigning physical incident-specific credentials to establish legitimacy and permit access to
686 incident sites. See *Credentialing*.

687 **Compact:** A contract between parties, which creates obligations and rights capable of being enforced
688 and contemplated as such between the parties in their distinct and independent characters.

689 **Credentialing:** Providing documentation that identifies personnel and authenticates and verifies their
690 qualification for a particular position. See *Badging*.

691 **Demobilization:** The orderly, safe and efficient return of an incident resource to its original location
692 and status.

693 **Dispatch:** The ordered movement of a resource or resources to an assigned operational mission, or
694 an administrative move from one location to another.

695 **Emergency:** Any incident, whether natural, technological, or human-caused, that necessitates
696 responsive action to protect life or property.

697 **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC):** A congressionally-ratified agreement that
698 provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid. Through EMAC, a disaster-affected state can
699 request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently, resolving two key
700 issues up front: liability and reimbursement.

701 **Entity:** A governmental jurisdiction, tribe, NGO, private sector organization, or community/faith-based
702 organization. When entities enter into a mutual aid agreement, they become parties to the
703 agreement.

704 **Incident:** An occurrence, natural or manmade, that necessitates a response to protect life or
705 property. In this document, the word "incident" includes planned events as well as emergencies
706 and/or disasters of all kinds and sizes.

707 **Interoperability:** The ability of systems, personnel and equipment to provide and receive functionality,
708 data, information and/or services to and from other systems, personnel and equipment, between
709 both public and private agencies, departments and other organizations in a manner enabling them to
710 operate effectively together. Interoperability allows emergency management/response personnel
711 and their affiliated organizations to communicate within and across agencies and jurisdictions via
712 voice, data, or video-on-demand in real time, when needed and when authorized.

713 **Mission-Ready Package (MRP):** A specific combination of resources with the capabilities to address
714 an anticipated functional need. Entities organize MRPs based on standardized resource typing
715 definitions.

716 **Mobilization:** The processes and procedures used by all organizations—local, state, Tribal Nation and
717 Federal—for activating, assembling and transporting all resources that have been requested to
718 respond to or support an incident.

719 **Mutual Aid:** The timely and efficient sharing of capabilities in the form of resources and services upon
720 request.

721 **Mutual Aid Agreement:** A written or oral agreement between and among agencies/organizations
722 and/or jurisdictions that provides a mechanism to quickly obtain assistance in the form of personnel,
723 equipment, materials and other associated services. The primary objective is to facilitate the rapid,
724 short-term deployment of emergency support prior to, during and/or after an incident.

725 **National Incident Management System (NIMS):** A systematic, proactive approach to guide all levels of
726 government, NGOs and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate,
727 respond to and recover from the effects of incidents. NIMS provides stakeholders across the whole
728 community with the shared vocabulary, systems and processes to successfully deliver the
729 capabilities described in the National Preparedness System. NIMS provides a consistent foundation
730 for dealing with all incidents, ranging from daily occurrences to incidents requiring a coordinated
731 Federal response.

732 **Nongovernmental Organization (NGO):** An entity with an association that is based on the interests of
733 its members, individuals, or institutions. An NGO is not created by a government, but it may work
734 cooperatively with government. Such organizations serve a public purpose, not a private benefit.
735 Examples of NGOs include faith-based groups, relief agencies, organizations that support people with
736 access and functional needs, and animal welfare organizations. NGOs provide relief services to
737 sustain life, reduce physical and emotional distress and promote the recovery of disaster survivors.

738 **Party:** A person or entity involved in an agreement.

739 **Planned Event:** An incident that is a scheduled non-emergency activity (e.g., sporting event, concert,
740 parade).

741 **Position Qualifications:** The minimum criteria necessary for individuals to fill a specific position.

- 742 **Protocol:** A set of established guidelines for actions (designated by individuals, teams, functions, or
743 capabilities) under various specified conditions.
- 744 **Receiving Party:** The party in the mutual aid agreement that receives resources.
- 745 **Reimbursement:** A mechanism to recoup funds expended for incident-specific activities.
- 746 **Resource Management:** Systems for identifying available resources at all jurisdictional levels to
747 enable timely, efficient and unimpeded access to resources needed to prepare for, respond to or
748 recover from an incident.
- 749 **Resource Typing:** Defining and categorizing incident resources by capability.
- 750 **Resources:** Personnel, equipment, teams, supplies and facilities available or potentially available for
751 assignment to incident operations and for which status is maintained. Resources are described by
752 kind and type and may be used in operational support or supervisory capacities at an incident or at
753 an emergency operations center.
- 754 **Sending Party:** The party in the mutual aid agreement that provides resources.
- 755 **Strike Team:** A set number of resources of the same kind and type that have an established
756 minimum number of personnel, common communications and a leader. In the law enforcement
757 community, strike teams are referred to as resource teams.
- 758 **Task Force:** Any combination of resources of different kinds and/or types assembled to support a
759 specific mission or operational need.
- 760 **Type:** A NIMS resource classification that refers to capability of a specific kind of resource that
761 applies a metric to designate it as a specific numbered class.
- 762 **United States National Grid:** A point and area location reference system that FEMA and other incident
763 management organizations use as an accurate and expeditious alternative to latitude/longitude.

764 **Appendix B. Acronyms**

765	AHJ	Authority Having Jurisdiction
766	EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact
767	EMS	Emergency Medical Services
768	ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
769	FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
770	IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs
771	ICS	Incident Command System
772	IMAS	Intrastate Mutual Aid System
773	MABAS	Mutual Aid Box Alarm System
774	MRP	Mission-Ready Package
775	NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
776	NIMS	National Incident Management System
777	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
778	SPEMAMA	State and Province Emergency Management Assistance Memorandum of Agreement

779 **Appendix C. Resources**

780 **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**

- 781 ▪ The NIMS document includes comprehensive guidance regarding incident resource
782 management, including the preparation and typing of resources including personnel.

- 783 ▪ The Resource Management section of NIMS contains specific information regarding the
784 qualification, certification and credentialing of incident management and support personnel. It
785 also defines the use of pertinent terms to ensure common terminology among all qualification
786 system users.

- 787 ▪ <https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>

788 **NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System**

- 789 ▪ The NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System supplements the Resource
790 Management component of NIMS by establishing guidance and tools to assist stakeholders in
791 developing processes for qualifying, certifying and credentialing deployable emergency
792 personnel.

- 793 ▪ www.fema.gov/national-qualification-system

794 **NIMS Webpage**

- 795 ▪ This webpage provides links to the NIMS documents, such as this Guideline, as well as
796 information regarding training, implementation guidance, the latest updates and contact
797 information for FEMA's regional NIMS coordinators.

- 798 ▪ <https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>

799 **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)**

- 800 ▪ A mutual aid compact that defines a non-Federal, state-to-state system for sharing resources
801 across state lines during an emergency or disaster. Signatories include all 50 states, the District
802 of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

- 803 ▪ <https://www.emacweb.org>

804 **FEMA’s International Assistance System Concept of** 805 **Operations**

- 806 ▪ The 2022 IAS CONOPS reflects current and future disaster response resource constraints,
807 increased complexity of domestic and global supply chains, and the increased frequency and
808 complexity of disasters and national emergencies requiring a coordinated federal response.
- 809 ▪ https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_ias-conops-2022.pdf

810 **Protections Against Discrimination and Other Prohibited** 811 **Practices**

- 812 ▪ Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- 813 ▪ Executive Order 13347- Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness (IDEP).
- 814 ▪ Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 (PETS Act).
- 815 ▪ Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.
- 816 ▪ Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- 817 ▪ Assistive Technology Act.
- 818 ▪ Telecommunications Act of 1996.
- 819 ▪ Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006.
- 820 ▪ Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010

821 **Additional Links to Consider**

- 822 ▪ Resource Typing Library Tool (RTLTL): FEMA’s RTLTL is an online catalog of national resource typing
823 definitions and NIMS Job Titles/Position Qualifications.
- 824 ▪ <https://rtlt.preptoolkit.fema.gov/Public/Combined>
- 825 ▪ Incident Command System (ICS) Resource Center: The Emergency Management Institute’s ICS
826 Resource Center provides information about and links to an extensive array of ICS training
827 materials, job aids, position checklists and forms.
- 828 ▪ <https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/icsresource/index.htm>
- 829 ▪ NIMS Training Program: The NIMS Training Program specifies NIC and stakeholder
830 responsibilities and activities for developing, maintaining and sustaining NIMS training.

- 831 ▪ <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/nims/implementation-training#training>
- 832 ▪ Community Lifelines Implementation Toolkit: The Community Lifelines Implementation Toolkit
833 provides whole community partners the information and resources to understand lifelines,
834 coordinate with entities using lifelines and serve as basic guidance for how to implement the
835 lifeline construct during incident response.
- 836 ▪ <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/lifelines-toolkit>
- 837 ▪ FEMA Incident Stabilization Guide: The FEMA Incident Stabilization Guide describes how FEMA
838 implements lifelines and guides how FEMA applies these concepts to disaster operations.
- 839 ▪ <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/IncidentStabilizationGuide.pdf>