

Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security
Training and NIMS Implementation Committee
March 28, 2007 Meeting Minutes
Hartford, CT

Attendees:

David Gofstein
Sgt. Robert Grega
Dan Scace
Susan Rainville
Ella Holst
Wayne Sandford
Libby Graham
Gary Pescosolido
Jackie Kilby-Richards
Jack Casner
Mary Duley
Jeff Morrissette

The meeting was called to order by Deputy Commissioner Wayne Sandford at 13:45 hours.

Libby Graham and Gary Pescosolido both representatives from the DEMHS Grants Unit were guests in attendance. The committee immediately went to Old Business to allow the guests an opportunity to present to the Committee information related to two agenda items; Review of the Backfill Stipend Policy and Grant Reimbursement Procedures.

A copy of Grant Policy #1 (*Grant reimbursement for overtime and backfill for part-time employees, career employees, and all volunteer responders participating in federal Office of Domestic Preparedness Training and Exercises*) was distributed to those in attendance. A review and discussion regarding the policy took place. It was discussed that FY04 and 05 funds were received by communities as individual grants. The DEMHS Training Budget is earmarked for training the five Regional Haz-Mate teams. Backfill / Overtime for the Haz-Mat teams are also charged to the DEMHS budget.

It was stressed that requests for reimbursement **cannot** be submitted for Backfill **AND** Overtime, only one or the other. If an employee's salary is less than \$25/hour then the reimbursement request can only be for the actual salary (hourly rate).

An inquiry was made regarding the ODP Training Program approval process. It was reminded that DEMHS has to follow the same process a local municipality or region would follow to attain ODP approval. It can be a lengthy process.

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D/C Sandford mentioned that the agency was moving closer to filling the vacancy for Training Program Specialist. There were ten candidates for the position. Once this position is filled it should eliminate some of the issues related to training.

Dan Scace inquired about the pre-approval to pay Stipends or Backfill for Exercises. It was stated that all Exercise must have a WMD component for the FY 04-06 grant years. In FY07, Exercises may be moving toward an All Hazard approach, not just WMD. It was stressed that when planning an Exercise that pre-approval be received to confirm funds would be reimbursed.

There are no stipends for volunteers related to planning activities however municipalities or regions may contract separately for these services.

There was discussion regarding a recent memo received from the NIMS Integration Center (NIC). For FY07, the NIC **encourages** (does not mandate) completion of I300 and 400 training for mid-level command and general staff. Discussion continued about the overall success we collectively have had with NIMS compliance training.

D/C Commissioner Sandford briefed the committee on a \$20 million grant DEMHS is seeking for interoperability communication (voice/data). If received, it would be used toward a project to install laptop computers in fire apparatus and other emergency vehicles and to generate a common database. This led to a discussion regarding the need to clarify the NIMS compliance issue requiring the use of "Plain Language" in our communications and issues related to resource typing. The Committee agreed that the State should proceed forward with the 17 NIMS requirements. The first significant step would be the development of a policy statement regarding common terminology/plain language. A Subcommittee was established to review and draft a Policy Statement to address the issue. The Subcommittee is comprised of Grega, Duley and Kilby-Richards. It is hoped a draft could be reviewed by the Committee at their May meeting and possibly presented to the Coordinating Council in June.

Returning to the regular agenda, the meeting minutes from the November 28, 2006 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Jack Casner to approve the minutes and was seconded by Dan Scace. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Under New Business, the agenda item regarding the Committee's efforts to revise the state's NIMS Integration Plan was tabled to allow members to further review the Plan and offer recommendations. While the NIMS Integration Center has softened their mandate for I300/400 training to "recommended", the committee agreed it should "Stay the Course" with our efforts and to formally recommend to the DEMHS Coordinating Council to maintain its commitment to training.

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D/C Sanford provided a brief overview of a recent Regional NIMS meeting he and other representatives from the state had attended in New York. Generally there was still a lot of confusion and inconsistency on the part of the Feds. Connecticut is not alone in their frustration over many issues. There was general consensus that the web-based ICS 100 and 200 programs were not adequately preparing students for the ICS 300 class.

The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, May 29, 2007.

A motion to adjourn was made by Jeff Morrissette and was seconded by Jack Casner. Motion carried.