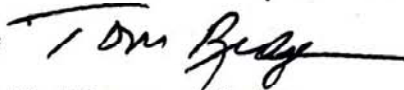




# Homeland Security

March 1, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: Cabinet Secretaries  
Agency Directors  
Members of Congress  
Governors  
Tribal Leaders  
Mayors  
County, Township, and Parish Officials  
State Homeland Security Advisors  
Homeland Security Advisory Council  
State, Territorial, Local, and Tribal First Responders

FROM: Tom Ridge 

SUBJECT: National Incident Management System

In Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5, *Management of Domestic Incidents*, the President directed me to develop, submit for review to the Homeland Security Council, and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS). This system will provide a consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State, local, and tribal governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

The NIMS has undergone extensive vetting and coordination within the Federal family. The development process has also included extensive outreach to State, local, and tribal officials; to the emergency response community; and to the private sector. As a result, the NIMS incorporates the best-practices currently in use by incident managers at all levels. In addition, effective incident management in the homeland security environment we now face involves new concepts, processes, and protocols that will require additional development and refinement over time. The collective input and guidance from all of our homeland security partners has been, and will continue to be, vital to the further development of an effective and comprehensive NIMS.

HSPD-5 requires all Federal departments and agencies to adopt the NIMS and to use it in their individual domestic incident management and emergency prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation programs and activities, as well as in support of those actions taken to assist State, local, or tribal entities. The directive also requires Federal departments and agencies to make adoption of the NIMS by State, tribal and local organizations a condition for Federal preparedness assistance beginning in FY 2005. Compliance with certain aspects of the NIMS will be possible in the short-term, such as adopting the basic tenets of the Incident Command System identified in this document. Other aspects of the NIMS, however, will require further development and refinement to enable compliance at future dates.

I ask for your continued cooperation and assistance as we further develop and implement the NIMS and the associated National Response Plan (NRP). I look forward to working with you as we continue our collective efforts to better secure the homeland and protect our citizens from both natural disasters and acts of terrorism.

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