

# INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW

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**This *National Response Framework (NRF)* [or *Framework*] is a guide to how the Nation conducts all-hazards response.** It is built upon *scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures* to align key roles and responsibilities *across the Nation*. It describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from the serious but purely local, to large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic natural disasters.

This document explains the common discipline and structures that have been exercised and matured at the local, tribal, State, and national levels over time. It describes key lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, focusing particularly on how the Federal Government is organized to support communities and States in catastrophic incidents. Most importantly, it builds upon the *National Incident Management System (NIMS)*, which provides a consistent template for managing incidents.

**The term “response” as used in this *Framework* includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs.** Response also includes the execution of emergency plans and actions to support short-term recovery. The *Framework* is always in effect, and elements can be implemented as needed on a flexible, scalable basis to improve response.

## INTENDED AUDIENCE

**The *Framework* is written especially for government executives, private-sector and nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders, and emergency management practitioners.** First, it is addressed to senior elected and appointed leaders, such as Federal department or agency heads, State Governors, mayors, tribal leaders, and city or county officials – those who have a responsibility to provide for effective response. For the Nation to be prepared for any and all hazards, its leaders must have a baseline familiarity with the concepts and mechanics of the *Framework*.

At the same time, the *Framework* informs emergency management practitioners, explaining the operating structures and tools used routinely by first responders and emergency managers at all levels of government. For these readers, the *Framework* is augmented with online access to supporting documents, further training, and an evolving resource for exchanging lessons learned.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> To support users of the *Framework*, the Department of Homeland Security has created an online **NRF Resource Center**, available at <http://www.fema.gov/NRF>. This online resource will routinely grow and evolve in support of the *Framework* and those who work with it. The initial postings contain multiple supporting documents, operational plans, standard forms, and other tools that are commonly used by the incident management community. The site will further explain technical aspects of the *Framework*, and will routinely post supporting documents as they are newly generated or improved.

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**One of the challenges to effective response is the relatively high turnover and short tenure among elected and appointed officials responsible for response at all levels.** Effective response hinges upon well-trained leaders and responders who have invested in response preparedness, developed engaged partnerships, and are able to achieve shared objectives. The players' bench is constantly changing, but a concise, common playbook is needed by all.

This *Framework* is intended to supply that essential playbook. It is rooted in extensive consultation among practitioners and policymakers at all levels. Operational planning for specific types of incidents has accelerated and improved nationwide since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (or 9/11). Such plans will continue to evolve in alignment with the *Framework*.

## EVOLUTION OF THE *FRAMEWORK*

**This document is an outgrowth of previous iterations of Federal planning documents.** A brief discussion of its history underscores important elements of the *Framework* and highlights improvements to the previous *National Response Plan (NRP)*. This *Framework* was preceded 15 years earlier by a *Federal Response Plan (1992)* that focused largely on Federal roles and responsibilities.

Following the 9/11 attacks, more urgent efforts were made to understand and implement common incident management and response principles and to develop common planning frameworks. The 2004 *NRP* was an early outgrowth of those discussions, replacing the *Federal Response Plan*. It was published one year after creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The *NRP* broke new ground in integrating all levels of government in a common incident management framework. It incorporated incident coordination roles for Federal agencies<sup>2</sup> as defined by several new laws and Presidential directives. Nine months after Katrina's landfall, a notice of change to the *NRP* was released, incorporating preliminary lessons learned from the 2005 hurricane season.

**Stakeholders suggested changes to the *NRP* – both structural and substantive.** Stakeholders have advised that both the initial *NRP* and its 2006 iteration were bureaucratic and internally repetitive.

Users also suggested the *NRP* was still insufficiently *national* in its focus, which is to say that it should speak more clearly to the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in response. Moreover, it was evident that the *NRP* and its supporting documents did not constitute a true operational *plan* in the sense understood by emergency managers. Its content was inconsistent with the promise of its title.

In the last several years, operational planning on a national basis for specific types of incidents has matured. Both public and private sectors are making significant homeland security investments to strengthen the Nation's response capability.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that within this document, use of the term "agency" when referring to Federal entities is inclusive of executive agencies, departments, and Government corporations.

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**By adopting the term “framework” within the title, this document is now more accurately aligned with its intended purpose.** Effective response to an incident is a shared responsibility of governments at all levels, the private sector and NGOs, and individual citizens. This *Framework* commits the Federal Government, in partnership with local, tribal, and State governments and the private sector, to complete both strategic and operational plans for the incident scenarios specified in the *National Preparedness Guidelines*.<sup>3</sup> These plans will ultimately improve significantly the Incident Annexes to this *Framework*, which have been carried forward from the *NRP*.

## FRAMEWORK UNPACKED

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The *Framework* presents the key response principles, participants, roles, and structures that guide the Nation's response operations. The remainder of the *Framework* is organized as follows:

- **Chapter I – Roles and Responsibilities.** This chapter sharpens the focus on *who* is involved with emergency management activities at the local, tribal, State, and Federal levels and with the private sector and NGOs.
- **Chapter II – Response Actions.** This chapter describes *what* we as a Nation collectively do to respond to incidents.
- **Chapter III – Response Organization.** This chapter explains *how* we as a Nation are organized to implement response actions.
- **Chapter IV – Planning: A Critical Element of Effective Response.** This chapter emphasizes the importance of planning and summarizes the elements of national planning structures.
- **Chapter V – Additional Resources.** This final chapter summarizes the content and plan for the online **NRF Resource Center**, a new, actively managed DHS/Federal Emergency Management Agency Web site that will deliver state-of-the-art support for the *Framework* with additional support tools shaped by and addressed to the response community.

## HOW THE FRAMEWORK IS ORGANIZED

**The *National Response Framework* is comprised of the core document, the Emergency Support Function (ESF), Support, and Incident Annexes, and the Partner Guides.** The core document describes the doctrine that guides our national response, roles and responsibilities, response actions, response organizations, and planning requirements to achieve an effective national response to any incident that occurs. The core document of the *National Response Framework* is effective 60 days after publication. The annexes and Partner Guides will be updated periodically and effective 60 days after publication.

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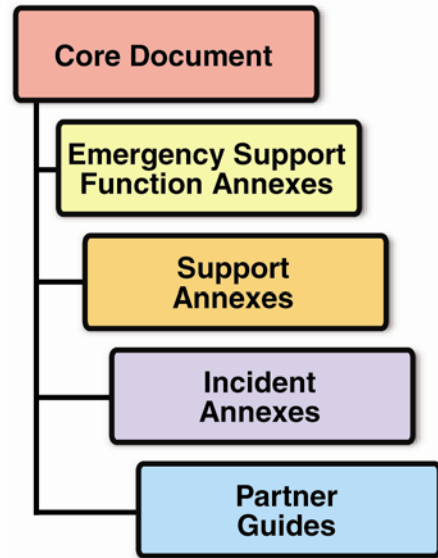
<sup>3</sup> The set of scenarios, while not exhaustive, is representative of a broad range of terrorist attacks and natural disasters that would stretch the Nation's prevention and response capabilities. Collectively, they yield core prevention and response requirements that can help direct comprehensive planning efforts.

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The following documents provide more detailed information to assist practitioners in implementing the *Framework*:

- **Emergency Support Function Annexes** group Federal resources and capabilities into functional areas that are most frequently needed in a national response (e.g., Transportation, Firefighting, Mass Care).
- **Support Annexes** describe essential supporting aspects that are common to all incidents (e.g., Financial Management, Volunteer and Donations Management, Private-Sector Coordination).
- **Incident Annexes** address the unique aspects of how we respond to seven broad incident categories (e.g., Biological, Nuclear/Radiological, Cyber, Mass Evacuation).
- **Partner Guides** provide ready references describing key roles and actions for local, tribal, State, Federal, and private-sector response partners.

**Figure 1. Organization of the *Framework***



The ***National Incident Management System (NIMS)*** is a companion document that provides standard command and management structures that apply to response activities. This system provides a consistent, nationwide template to enable Federal, State, tribal, and local governments, the private sector, and NGOs to work together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity. This consistency provides the foundation for utilization of the *NIMS* for all incidents, ranging from daily occurrences to incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

These documents are available at the **NRF Resource Center**, <http://www.fema.gov/NRF>.

## RESPONSE: THE *WHO*

**An effective, unified national response requires layered, mutually supporting capabilities.** The *Framework* systematically incorporates public-sector agencies, the private sector, and NGOs. It also emphasizes the importance of personal preparedness by individuals and households.

Communities, tribes, States, the Federal Government, NGOs, and the private sector should each understand their respective roles and responsibilities, and complement each other in achieving shared goals. Each governmental level plays a prominent role in developing capabilities needed to respond to incidents. This includes developing plans, conducting assessments and exercises, providing and directing resources and capabilities, and gathering lessons learned. These activities require that involved organizations understand their roles and responsibilities, and how they fit within and are supported by the *Framework*.

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**It is important that each level of government adapt and apply the general roles outlined in the *Framework*.** To do this, organizations should define key leadership and staff functions, adopt capabilities-based planning as the method to build response capabilities, and impose the discipline needed to plan and operate effectively. Partner Guides that summarize core *Framework* concepts and are tailored specifically to leaders at different levels and types of organizations are provided through the online **NRF Resource Center**.

Even when a community is overwhelmed by an incident, there is still a core, sovereign responsibility to be exercised at this local level, with unique response obligations to coordinate with State, Federal, and private-sector support teams. Each organization or level of government therefore has an imperative to fund and execute its own core emergency management responsibilities.

Below is a brief summary of emergency management roles at the local, tribal, State, and Federal levels, as well as the roles of private-sector organizations. Emergency management is the coordination and integration of all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, or mitigate against threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other manmade disasters.

**Local Governments. Resilient communities begin with prepared individuals and depend on the leadership and engagement of local government, NGOs, and the private sector.** Individuals, families, and caregivers to those with special needs should enhance their awareness of risk and threats, develop household emergency plans that include care for pets and service animals, and prepare emergency supply kits.<sup>4</sup> Individuals can also volunteer in their communities.

Local police, fire, emergency medical services, public health and medical providers, emergency management, public works, environmental response professionals, and others in the community are often the first to detect a threat or hazard, or respond to an incident. They also are often the last to leave an incident site or otherwise to cope with the effects of an incident. The local senior elected or appointed official (the mayor, city manager, or county manager) is responsible for ensuring the public safety and welfare of residents. In today's world, senior officials and their emergency managers build the foundation for an effective response. They organize and integrate their capabilities and resources with neighboring jurisdictions, the State, NGOs, and the private sector. Increasingly, businesses are vital partners within communities wherever retail locations, service sites, manufacturing facilities, or management offices are located. NGOs and not-for-profit organizations also play a key role in strengthening communities' response efforts through their knowledge of hard-to-reach populations, outreach, and services.

**States, Territories, and Tribal Governments. States, territories, and tribal governments have responsibility for the public health and welfare of the people in their jurisdiction.** State and local governments are closest to those impacted by incidents, and have always had the lead in response and recovery. During response, States play a key role coordinating resources and capabilities throughout the State and obtaining resources and capabilities from other States. States are sovereign entities, and the Governor has responsibility for public safety and welfare. While U.S. territories,

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<sup>4</sup> More information on preparing a household emergency plan is available at <http://www.ready.gov>.

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possessions, freely associated states,<sup>5</sup> and tribal governments also have sovereign rights, there are unique factors involved in working with these entities. Stafford Act assistance is available to States and to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, which are included in the definition of “State” in the Stafford Act.<sup>6</sup>

States have significant resources of their own, including State emergency management and homeland security agencies, State police, health agencies, transportation agencies, incident management teams, specialized teams, and the National Guard. The role of the State government in response is to supplement local efforts before, during, and after incidents. **If a State anticipates that its resources may be exceeded, the Governor can request assistance from the Federal Government and/or from other States through mutual aid and assistance agreements such as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).**<sup>7</sup>

**The Federal Government.** The Federal Government maintains a wide array of capabilities and resources that can be made available upon request of the Governor. When an incident occurs that exceeds or is anticipated to exceed State, tribal, or local resources, the Federal Government may provide resources and capabilities to support the State response. For incidents involving primary Federal jurisdiction or authorities (e.g., on a military base or a Federal facility or lands), Federal departments or agencies may be the first responders and first line of defense, coordinating activities with State, territorial, tribal, and local partners. The Federal Government also maintains working relationships with the private sector and NGOs.

Pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5, the Secretary of Homeland Security is the principal Federal official for domestic incident management. Incident management refers to how incidents are managed across all homeland security activities, including prevention, protection, and response and recovery. Other Federal departments and agencies have key responsibilities to support national response activities and carry out those responsibilities within the overarching coordinating mechanisms of this *Framework*. DHS coordinates with other agencies to surge Federal support at the headquarters, regional, and field levels.

**The Private Sector and NGOs.** The private sector and NGOs contribute to response efforts through engaged partnerships with each level of government. Private-sector organizations and NGOs are encouraged to develop contingency plans and to work with State and local planners to ensure that their plans are consistent with pertinent plans, the *NIMS*, and this *Framework*.

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<sup>5</sup> The *Framework* is applicable to U.S. possessions and insular areas, as well as the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The U.S. Government does not provide disaster assistance to the Republic of Palau, in accordance with the Compact of Free Association. Insular areas include Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

<sup>6</sup> Often throughout this *Framework*, discussion of authorities and roles of States is also intended to incorporate those of U.S. territories and possessions and tribal nations.

<sup>7</sup> A reference paper on EMAC is available at the **NRF Resource Center**, <http://www.fema.gov/NRF>.

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**Private-sector organizations play an essential role in protecting critical infrastructure systems and implementing plans for the rapid restoration of normal commercial activities and critical infrastructure operations in the event of disruption.**<sup>8</sup> The protection of critical infrastructure and the ability to rapidly restore normal commercial activities can mitigate the impact of an incident, improve the quality of life of individuals, and accelerate the pace of recovery for communities and the Nation. There are not-for-profit owners/operators of critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR) facilities, notably in healthcare and power generation.

**NGOs also serve a vital role at the local, State, and national levels by performing essential service missions in times of need.** They provide sheltering, emergency food supplies, and other vital support services. NGOs bolster and support government efforts at all levels.<sup>9</sup>

## RESPONSE: THE *WHAT* AND THE *HOW*

**The *National Response Framework* is always in effect, and elements can be implemented at any level at any time.** The *Framework* is capabilities based, which is to say that local governments, tribes, States, and the Federal Government all develop functional capabilities and identify resources that may be required based on hazard identification and risk assessment, threats, and other potential incidents such as those represented by the National Planning Scenarios.

**The *Framework* describes *what we do* and *how we respond*.** In short, the *National Response Framework* explains how, at all levels, the Nation effectively manages all-hazards response consistent with the *National Strategy for Homeland Security*. The remainder of this Introduction explains the *Framework's* scope, the response doctrine that animates it, and the preparedness strategy of which it is a part. It correlates with an outline of the overall document.

## SCOPE

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**The *Framework* provides structures for implementing nationwide response policy and operational coordination for all types of domestic incidents.** It can be partially or fully implemented in the context of a threat, in anticipation of a significant event, or in response to an incident. Selective implementation allows for a scaled response, delivery of the resources needed, and an appropriate level of coordination.

In this document, incidents include actual or potential emergencies or all-hazards events that range from accidents and natural disasters to actual or potential terrorist attacks. They include events wholly contained within a single jurisdiction and others that are catastrophic in nature and national in their scope or consequences.

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<sup>8</sup> Additional information on protection of critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR) can be found in the CIKR Support Annex available at the **NRF Resource Center**, <http://www.fema.gov/NRF>.

<sup>9</sup> The American Red Cross is a federally chartered instrumentality of the U.S. Government, but it is not a Federal agency under this *Framework*.

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**It is not always obvious at the outset whether a seemingly minor event might be the initial phase of a larger, rapidly growing threat.** The *Framework* incorporates standardized organizational structures that promote on-scene initiative, innovation, and sharing of essential resources drawn from all levels of government, NGOs, and the private sector. Response must be quickly scalable, flexible, and adaptable.

The *Framework* is also intended to accelerate the assessment and response to incidents that may require Federal assistance. In practice, many incidents require virtually reflexive activation of interagency coordination protocols to forestall the incident from becoming worse or to surge more aggressively to contain it. A Federal department or agency acting on independent authority may be the initial and the primary Federal responder, but incidents that require more systematic Federal response efforts are now actively coordinated through the appropriate *Framework* mechanisms described in this document and in its supporting annexes. This initial coordination of Federal incident assessment and response efforts is intended to occur seamlessly, without the need for any formal trigger mechanism.

**This *Framework*, therefore, eliminates the Incident of National Significance declaration.** No such declaration is required by the *Framework* and none will be made. The authorities of the Secretary of Homeland Security to coordinate large-scale national responses are unaltered by this change. Elimination of this declaration will, however, support a more nimble, scalable, and coordinated response by the entire national emergency management community.

## RESPONSE DOCTRINE

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**Response doctrine defines basic roles, responsibilities, and operational concepts for response across all levels of government and with NGOs and the private sector.** The overarching objective of response activities centers upon saving lives and protecting property and the environment. Five key principles of operations define response actions in support of the Nation's response mission. Taken together, these five principles of operation constitute **national response doctrine**.

### Response Doctrine: Five Key Principles

1. Engaged partnership
2. Tiered response
3. Scalable, flexible, and adaptable operational capabilities
4. Unity of effort through unified command
5. Readiness to act

**Response doctrine is rooted in America's Federal system and the Constitution's division of responsibilities between Federal and State governments.** Because this doctrine reflects the history of emergency management and the distilled wisdom of responders and leaders at all levels, it gives elemental form to the *Framework*.

This doctrine "evolves in response to changes in the political and strategic landscape, lessons learned from operations, and the introduction of new technologies. Doctrine influences the way in which policy and plans are developed, forces are organized and

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trained, and equipment is procured. It promotes unity of purpose, guides professional judgment, and enables responders to best fulfill their responsibilities."<sup>10</sup>

**Response doctrine evolves slowly.** Response strategy and the *Framework* merit periodic review and revision, while operational plans supporting the *Framework* must be tested and improved through a process of continuous innovation. The last is especially true regarding operational plans to counter the threat of a terrorist attack.

**Response doctrine is comprised of five key principles:** (1) engaged partnership, (2) tiered response, (3) scalable, flexible, and adaptable operational capabilities, (4) unity of effort through unified command, and (5) readiness to act. An introductory word about each follows.

## ENGAGED PARTNERSHIP

Leaders at all levels must communicate and actively support engaged partnerships by developing shared goals and aligning capabilities so that no one is overwhelmed in times of crisis. Layered, mutually supporting capabilities at Federal, State, tribal, and local levels allow for planning together in times of calm and responding together effectively in times of need. Engaged partnership includes ongoing communication of incident activity among all partners to the *Framework*, and shared situational awareness for a more rapid response. In particular, the potential for terrorist incidents requires a *heightened state of readiness* and nimble, practiced capabilities baked into the heart of our preparedness and response planning.

**Engaged partnerships are essential to preparedness.** Effective response activities begin with a host of preparedness activities conducted well in advance of an incident. Preparedness involves a combination of planning, resources, training, exercising, and organizing to build, sustain, and improve operational capabilities. Preparedness is the process of identifying the personnel, training, and equipment needed for a wide range of potential incidents, and developing jurisdiction-specific plans for delivering capabilities when needed for an incident.

Preparedness activities should be coordinated among all involved agencies within the jurisdiction, as well as across jurisdictions. Integrated planning, described later in this *Framework*, will assist in identifying gaps in capability and developing strategies to fill those gaps.

Nationwide preparedness is described in the *National Preparedness Guidelines* and the *National Exercise Program*.<sup>11</sup> These documents lay out 15 National Planning Scenarios that form the basis of the newly coordinated national exercise schedule and priorities, and identify 37 core capabilities that are needed to support response across the Nation. The *Guidelines* identify core local, tribal, community, and State capabilities that will be supported by the DHS homeland security grant programs.

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<sup>10</sup> *United States Coast Guard: America's Maritime Guardian*, Coast Guard Publication 1 (Washington, DC: January 2002, second printing), p. 3. The term "doctrine" has clear and rich meaning as a guide to action within the military services. See also U.S. Department of Defense's *Joint Operations Planning and Execution System*, an overview of which is available at [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/other\\_pubs/jopes.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/other_pubs/jopes.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Information on the *National Preparedness Guidelines* can be found at the **NRF Resource Center**, <http://www.fema.gov/NRF>.

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### TIERED RESPONSE

**Incidents must be managed at the lowest possible jurisdictional level and supported by additional capabilities when needed.** It is not necessary that each level be overwhelmed prior to requesting resources from another level.

Incidents begin and end locally, and most are wholly managed at the local level. Many incidents require unified response from local agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, and some require additional support from neighboring jurisdictions or the State. A small number require Federal support. National response protocols recognize this and are structured to provide additional, tiered levels of support when there is a need for more resources or capabilities to support and sustain the response and initial recovery. All levels should be prepared to respond, anticipating resources that may be required.

**A basic premise of the *Framework* is that incidents are generally handled at the lowest jurisdictional level possible.**

### SCALABLE, FLEXIBLE, AND ADAPTABLE OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES

**As incidents change in size, scope, and complexity, the response must adapt to meet requirements.** The number, type, and sources of resources must be able to expand rapidly to meet needs associated with a given incident. The *Framework's* disciplined and coordinated process can provide for a rapid surge of resources from all levels of government, appropriately scaled to need. Execution must be flexible and adapted to fit each individual incident. For the duration of a response, and as needs grow and change, responders must remain nimble and adaptable. Equally, the overall response should be flexible as it transitions from the response effort to recovery.

This *Framework* is grounded in doctrine that demands a tested inventory of common organizational structures and capabilities that are scalable, flexible, and adaptable for diverse operations. Adoption of the *Framework* across all levels of government and with businesses and NGOs will facilitate interoperability and improve operational coordination.

### UNITY OF EFFORT THROUGH UNIFIED COMMAND

**Effective *unified command* is indispensable to response activities and requires a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each participating organization.** Success requires *unity of effort*, which respects the chain of command of each participating organization while harnessing seamless coordination across jurisdictions in support of common objectives.

Use of the Incident Command System (ICS) is an important element across multijurisdictional or multiagency incident management activities. It provides a structure to enable agencies with different legal, jurisdictional, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively on scene. As a team effort, unified command allows all agencies with jurisdictional authority and/or functional responsibility for the incident to provide joint support through mutually developed incident objectives and strategies established at the command level. Each participating agency maintains its own authority, responsibility, and accountability. This *Framework* employs the *NIMS*

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standardized structures and tools that enable a unified approach to be effective both on scene and at the emergency operations centers.

The Department of Defense (DOD) is a full partner in the Federal response to domestic incidents, and its response is fully coordinated through the mechanisms of this *Framework*.<sup>12</sup> Concepts of “command” and “unity of command” have distinct legal and cultural meanings for military forces and military operations. For Federal military forces, command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the Commander of the combatant command to the DOD on-scene commander. Military forces will always remain under the operational and administrative control of the military chain of command, and these forces are subject to redirection or recall at any time. The ICS “unified command” concept is distinct from the military chain of command use of this term. And, as such, military forces do not operate under the command of the Incident Commander or under the unified command structure.

The *NIMS*<sup>13</sup> supports response through the following elements of unified command: (1) developing a single set of objectives; (2) using a collective, strategic approach; (3) improving information flow and coordination; (4) creating common understanding of joint priorities and restrictions; (5) ensuring that no agency’s legal authorities are compromised or neglected; and (6) optimizing the combined efforts of all agencies under a single plan.

## READINESS TO ACT

**Effective response requires readiness to act balanced with an understanding of risk.** From individuals, households, and communities to local, tribal, State, and Federal governments, national response depends on the instinct and ability to act. A forward-leaning posture is imperative for incidents that have the potential to expand rapidly in size, scope, or complexity, and for no-notice incidents.

**Once response activities have begun, on-scene actions are based on *NIMS* principles.** To save lives and protect property and the environment, decisive action on scene is often required of responders. Although some risk may be unavoidable, first responders can effectively anticipate and manage risk through proper training and planning.

Command, single or unified, is responsible for establishing immediate priorities for the safety of not only the public, but the responders and other emergency workers involved in the response, and for ensuring that adequate health and safety measures are in place. The Incident Commander should ensure that each incident has a designated safety officer who has been trained and equipped to assess the operation, identify hazardous and unsafe situations, and implement effective safety plans.

**Acting swiftly and effectively requires clear, focused communication and the processes to support it.** Without effective communication, a bias toward action will be ineffectual at best, likely perilous. An effective national response relies on disciplined processes, procedures, and systems to communicate timely, accurate, and accessible information on the incident’s cause, size, and current situation to the public, responders,

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<sup>12</sup> The Secretary of Defense retains command of DOD military forces providing Defense Support of Civil Authorities. National Guard forces under the command and control of a Governor are not DOD military forces. Nothing in this *Framework* impairs or otherwise affects the authority of the Secretary of Defense over the DOD.

<sup>13</sup> The *National Incident Management System* is available at the **NRF Resource Center**, <http://www.fema.gov/NRF>.

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and others. Well-developed public information, education strategies, and communication plans help to ensure that lifesaving measures, evacuation routes, threat and alert systems, and other public safety information are coordinated and communicated to numerous diverse audiences in a consistent, accessible, and timely manner.

## PART OF A BROADER STRATEGY

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The *National Response Framework* is required by, and integrates under, a larger *National Strategy for Homeland Security (Strategy)* that serves to guide, organize, and unify our Nation's homeland security efforts. The *Strategy* reflects our increased understanding of the threats confronting the United States, incorporates lessons learned from exercises and real-world catastrophes, and articulates how we should ensure our long-term success by strengthening the homeland security foundation we have built. It provides a common framework by which our entire Nation should focus its homeland security efforts on achieving the following four goals:

1. Prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks.
2. Protect the American people and our critical infrastructure and key resources.
3. Respond to and recover from incidents that do occur.
4. Continue to strengthen the foundation to ensure our long-term success.

While the first three goals help to organize our national efforts, the last goal entails creating and transforming our homeland security principles, systems, structures, and institutions. This includes applying a comprehensive approach to risk management, building a culture of preparedness, developing a comprehensive Homeland Security Management System, improving incident management, better utilizing science and technology, and leveraging all instruments of national power and influence.

The *Framework* primarily focuses on the third goal: respond to and recover from incidents that do occur. The *Strategy* also provides the context that given the certainty of catastrophes on our soil – no matter how unprecedented or extraordinary – it is our collective duty to provide the best response possible. It states that, when needed, we will bring to bear the Nation's full capabilities and resources to save lives, mitigate suffering, and protect property. The *Strategy* also reminds us that as the Nation responds to an incident, we must also begin to lay the foundation not only for a strong recovery over the short term but also for the rebuilding and revitalization of affected communities and regions over the long term.

The *Strategy* calls for a *National Response Framework* that helps to strengthen the foundation for an effective national response, rapidly assess emerging incidents, take initial actions, expand operations as needed, and commence recovery actions to stabilize the area. It also calls for the *Framework* to be clearly written, easy to understand, and designed to be truly national in scope, meeting the needs of State, local, and tribal governments and the private sector and NGOs, as well as the Federal Government. In addition, the *Strategy* underscores the need to ensure that those communities devastated or severely affected by a catastrophic incident are set on a sustainable path for long-term rebuilding and revitalization. The *Framework* is designed to respond to and support the *Strategy* and is intended to be informed by and tie seamlessly to national, State, tribal, and local preparedness activities and investments.

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The *Strategy* further describes how the other three national goals are supported through other strategies, plans, and ongoing efforts. For example, the national goal to prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks is further supported by the updated *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, released in September 2006, which articulates our Nation's strategy for winning the War on Terror. The sections in both on preventing and disrupting terrorist attacks are complementary and mutually reinforcing. In order to prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks in the United States, we are working to deny terrorists and terrorist-related weapons and materials entry into our country and across all international borders, disrupt their ability to operate within our borders, and prevent the emergence of violent Islamic radicalization in order to deny terrorists future recruits and defeat homegrown extremism. Our *National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel*, *National Strategy for Maritime Security*, and *National Strategy for Aviation Security* are helping to guide our efforts in this area.

The national goal to protect the American people and our critical infrastructure and key resources is also supported by existing plans. The *Strategy* sets forth that to protect the lives and livelihoods of the American people, we must undertake measures to deter the threat of terrorism, mitigate the Nation's vulnerability to acts of terror and the full range of manmade and natural catastrophes, and minimize the consequences of an attack or disaster should it occur. Safeguarding the American people also includes the preservation of the Nation's CIKR. Guiding our efforts to protect the Nation's CIKR is the 2006 *National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP)* and its supporting Sector-Specific Plans, which were developed pursuant to HSPD-7, issued on December 17, 2003. The *NIPP* sets forth a comprehensive risk management framework and provides a coordinated approach to CIKR protection roles and responsibilities for Federal, State, local, and private-sector security partners. It sets national priorities, goals, and requirements for the effective distribution of funding and resources that will help ensure that our government, economy, and public services continue to function in the event of a manmade or natural disaster.

The last national goal is to continue to strengthen the foundation to ensure our long-term success. To fulfill these responsibilities over the long term, we will continue to strengthen the principles, systems, structures, and institutions that cut across the homeland security enterprise and support our activities to secure the homeland. Ultimately, this will help ensure the success of our *Strategy* to secure the Nation.

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