

**APHIS NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS)
TRAINING AND EXERCISE PROGRAM (NTEP)**

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1. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) policy for implementing a National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training and Exercise Program (NTEP) to prepare the Agency for plant, animal, and all-hazards emergency responses.

2. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- a. This is a new directive.
- b. This Directive is in force until canceled or superseded.

3. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

This Directive must be applied in conjunction with:

- a. [USDA Department Manual \(DM\) 1800-001, Incident Preparedness, Response and Recovery](#)
- b. [USDA Department Regulation \(DR\) 1800-001, Incident Preparedness, Response, and Recovery](#)
- c. [USDA Department Regulation \(DR\) 3300-001-J, Emergency Communications Programs](#)
- d. [National Incident Management System, Third Edition](#)

4. SCOPE

This Directive applies to all APHIS programs, support units, and offices. It establishes APHIS as an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to create and deliver emergency response training for both NIMS-type and Agency-specific resources. It also defines processes and requirements to train and credential instructors to deliver this training under the NTEP.

5. POLICY

- a. The NTEP is maintained by Emergency and Regulatory Compliance Services' (ERCS) Emergency Management, Safety, and Security Division (EMSSD), Emergency Management Branch. Dedicated staff execute the administrative functions of the program as defined in this Directive.
- b. APHIS maintains a volunteer cadre of credentialed instructors to deliver NIMS and Incident Command System (ICS) based training to both APHIS employees and external partners, including state, local, and private entities.
- c. APHIS will train instructors to nationally recognized standards and issue appropriate credentials suitable for identification during performance of duties.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following individuals and groups implement this Directive's policy:

- a. [Emergency Preparedness Committee \(EPC\)](#)
 - (1) Periodically reviews this Directive and supports uniform, Agency-wide implementation, and socialization.

- b. Deputy Administrator for ERCS
 - (1) Encourages executive leadership to advocate for participation in the NTEP and instructor cadre to facilitate Agency preparedness.
- c. Director for EMSSD
 - (1) Oversees NTEP implementation and promotes NTEP's capabilities to APHIS program offices.
 - (2) Serves as the authoritative signatory for APHIS NTEP course completion certificates and instructor credential letters.
- d. NTEP Manager
 - (1) Maintains roster of volunteer instructor cadre members and issues instructor credentials.
 - (2) Coordinates course delivery with the NTEP instructor cadre, to include scheduling, logistics, developing participant rosters, and recordkeeping.
 - (3) Communicates with program training representatives or equivalent to document demand for specific courses and determine optimal delivery method.
 - (4) Creates, publishes, and maintains a Multiyear Training and Exercise Plan (MYTEP) outlining the long-term preparedness strategy for the Agency.
 - (5) Uses the AgLearn Learning Management System to schedule courses, develop participant rosters, and maintain certificates of completion for APHIS-delivered NTEP courses.
 - (6) Monitors and responds to requests for NTEP support sent to the NIMS.Training@usda.gov mailbox.
 - (7) Maintains the [NTEP SharePoint site](#) to advertise training opportunities identified in the MYTEP and recruit NTEP instructors.
 - (8) Maintains good working relationships with other federal agency training partners and state training officers in states where APHIS has hub locations to cultivate economical joint preparedness opportunities.
- e. NTEP Instructors
 - (1) Maintain instruction standards, including quality, duration, and curriculum integrity.
 - (2) Proctor course exams, maintain participant accountability, and ensure safety protocols are followed during course delivery.

- (3) Coordinate with the NTEP manager to determine course delivery location and any parking pass, building access, or printed materials requirements.
- (4) At the completion of a course, delivers copies of the course roster, course evaluation forms and course completion certificates to the NTEP Manager for filing.

7. PROCEDURES

The following procedures are established by this Directive:

a. Course Instruction Requirements

ERCS will fund course deliveries, to include expenses for instructor travel, printed materials as requested, and course updates. Travel costs for course participants will primarily be charged to the participant's parent program or unit, however, there may be circumstances when ERCS can subsidize these expenses.

APHIS courses will generally be delivered face-to-face in a classroom setting; however, virtual course deliveries may be approved by the NTEP manager on a case-by-case basis. Regardless of delivery method, all course materials (manuals, training aids, etc.) will be digital, with the exception of course exams, rosters, and evaluations. Any printed materials will be created by the NTEP manager, and they will coordinate with the lead instructor to send materials to the delivery location ahead of the course start date. If a course cannot be delivered digitally and requires printed materials, such as manuals and teaching aides, the lead instructor must coordinate requests with the NTEP manager in advance so that materials can be printed and shipped before the course begins. In some cases, the lead instructor can coordinate with organization that the course is being delivered to for printing of course materials.

When an APHIS instructor delivers an APHIS-specific course, the instructor may provide each participant who successfully completes the course with an official APHIS course completion certificate. When an APHIS instructor delivers a NIMS course, the instructor must first be credentialed by the NTEP manager to facilitate the course. Credentialed instructors may provide each participant who completes a NIMS course with an official course completion certificate. Instructor candidates seeking credentials to instruct NIMS courses may also instruct a course as part of their instructor training and may be accompanied by a credentialed instructor who can provide course completion certificates. In rare cases, an instructor candidate may also instruct solo to gain experience, and employees may volunteer to serve as students. In these cases, course completion certificates will not be issued, and participants will not receive course completion credit in AgLearn.

b. Course Titles and Course Descriptions

The below list of APHIS provided NIMS courses is not all inclusive, and NIMS course convenings are also available through other nationally credentialed federal, state, and non-government providers. APHIS employees can attend NIMS training and receive course completion credit in AgLearn upon submission of course completion documentation to the APHIS NTEP manager at NIMS.Training@usda.gov.

ICS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System, introduces the Incident Command System (ICS) and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training.

ICS-200 Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response, reviews the Incident Command System (ICS), provides the context for ICS within initial response, and supports higher level ICS training.

ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents, provides training and resources for personnel who require advanced knowledge and application of the ICS. This course expands upon information covered in prerequisite courses ICS-100 and ICS-200.

ICS-400 Advanced ICS, provides training and resources for personnel who require advanced application of ICS. This course expands upon information covered in prerequisite courses ICS-100 through ICS-300.

ICS-402 Overview for Executives/Senior Officials, introduction and overview of the ICS system for elected officials and senior staff. The course covers basic ICS principles and how ICS is critically important for supporting effective emergency management.

IS-700 NIMS Introduction, provides an overview of the NIMS concept by providing a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents.

IS-800 National Response Framework an Introduction, provides guidance for the whole community. Within this broad audience, the National Response Framework focuses especially on those who are involved in delivering and applying the response core capabilities.

G-191 Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface, reviews ICS and EOC responsibilities and functions and depends heavily on exercises and group discussions to formulate the interface. The course provides an opportunity for participants to begin developing an interface between an Incident Management Team and EOC personnel. Prerequisites for this course include ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800.

Specific requirements for the level and number of instructors that are required to facilitate basic NIMS courses for APHIS are detailed below.

Course materials are generally standardized by FEMA, but several scenarios are tailored to agricultural emergency response. NTEP instructors can access course materials posted to the [Instructor Materials](#) section of the [NTEP SharePoint site](#).

At the conclusion of each course, the instructor(s) will provide course evaluation forms and final exams to course participants. The lead instructor will grade final exams, add grades to the Course Roster, and email the Course Roster and Course Evaluations to the APHIS NTEP manager at NIMS.Training@usda.gov. The NTEP manager will review and record the information in AgLearn, prepare course completion certificates, and email them to participants who successfully complete the course.

c. Instructor Application, Types, & Credentialing Process

APHIS NTEP instructors are qualified per the [FEMA 0449 Curricula Train-the-Trainer course](#) to deliver ICS-100, ICS-200, ICS-300, ICS-400, ICS-402, IS-700, IS-800, and ICS-191 training to APHIS, other federal, state, and nongovernmental partner personnel. Some instructors may be certified to deliver other preparedness coursework, to include Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), Continuity of Operations (COOP), NIMS position-specific courses, and others. These certifications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and APHIS may issue credentials for instructors to deliver these courses.

Instructor Types

In the delivery of NIMS, ICS, and related coursework, APHIS recognizes and credentials the following levels of instructors:

(1) Lead instructor

Lead instructors are the primary instructors for a specific course. Lead instructors have met all instructor qualifications and are highly experienced with delivery.

(2) Support instructor

Support instructors assist the lead instructor with delivery of the course. Support instructors may or may not have met all the instructor qualifications but must have experience with the course content. They often accompany a lead instructor and provide some instruction or otherwise support course delivery as on-the-job training to meet requirements to become a lead instructor. Support instructors perform under the supervision of the lead instructor.

All APHIS delivered NTEP courses require at least one lead instructor for delivery. Courses requiring more than one instructor may be delivered with one lead instructor and any number of support instructors.

Volunteer instructors for the NTEP instructor cadre can be APHIS employees from any program or support unit within the Agency. Ideally, instructors will have documented service in a mid-level emergency management and incident response position within the past 5 years during real-world responses, planned events, or functional exercises.

Prospective instructors can submit an instructor application along with the following information to NIMS.Training@usda.gov:

- Current resume.
- Supervisor's written approval.
- [FEMA Transcript](#) reflecting completion of IS-100, IS-200, IS-700, IS-800.
- Certificates of completion for the following, if available: ICS-300, ICS-400, E/G/L0191, E/G/L0449, and E/G/L0141 or other instructional certificate or documented teaching experience.

Applications can be received by the NTEP manager year-round. After reviewing all prerequisite evidence, if the candidate is found to be qualified for the program, the NTEP manager will work with them to obtain any relevant experience and complete the training requirements. ERCS will fund portions of this training, to include travel, lodging, tuition, and per diem. Base salary and overtime pay are not covered expenses. Candidate should coordinate funding details with the NTEP manager.

Upon completion of all prerequisite coursework and documented experience, the NTEP manager will issue a credential letter and badge for the instructor. Credentials are issued for a 5-year period and are re-issued upon request to continue participating in the instructor cadre so long as the instructor has met the minimum requirements to maintain an active instructor status.

Active instructors are those who have served as a Lead or Support instructor during a course delivery for a minimum of 8 contact hours every 24 months. The 8 contact hours do not have to be concurrent. Contact hours are tracked by the NTEP manager.

Instructors who have not been active for a two-year period will be placed in an inactive status on the NTEP Instructor List. For reinstatement to an active status, instructors must submit a formal request to the NTEP manager. The NTEP manager will conduct an audit of the instructor list every year in November to verify instructor status and confirm contact information.

This program is voluntary, and instructors can choose to terminate their participation at any time. Instructors must return badges to the NTEP manager when they retire from the cadre. Badges should be returned in person or mailed to:

**National Training Exercise Program Manager
Emergency Management, Safety, and Security Division
Emergency and Regulatory Compliance Services
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
4700 River Road, Unit 72
Riverdale, MD 20737**

d. Instructor Conduct & Expectations

An instructor provides course information to students with diverse backgrounds, enabling them to learn effectively. While delivering courses, instructors represent APHIS and are expected to conduct themselves professionally and in accordance with this policy, using the materials provided. Instructors are expected to:

- Serve in the position with honor.
- Treat students and other instructors with respect and dignity.
- Use relevant stories and information, as appropriate.
- Be available during course hours for student questions.
- Respond promptly to student requests, questions, and concerns.
- Maintain the confidentiality of student scores and any personal information a student may share.
- Promote health and safety standards that ensure the protection of all participants.
- Take steps to make the classroom and materials accessible to all participants.
- Accommodate access and functional needs to the greatest extent possible.
- Dress in appropriate attire.
- Refrain from public criticism of students, other instructors, or other agencies.
- Refrain from using profane, harassing, or otherwise offensive language or humor.

- Refrain from delivering any course while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The NTEP uses student evaluations and feedback to evaluate instructor success. Negative student evaluations or feedback will result in an audit of course instruction with recommendations for improvement. In this situation, the instructor will have an opportunity to address documented improvement actions. If negative feedback persists, the NTEP manager may remove an instructor's credential to deliver courses for APHIS.

e. AgLearn Use

The NTEP manager will use AgLearn as the APHIS Learning Management System to schedule courses, develop a participant roster, and maintain certificates of completion for APHIS-delivered NTEP courses. This system maintains a historical record of courses delivered, participants, and course completion certificates for a period of 5 years. USDA participants can obtain a copy of their record of learning directly from their AgLearn profile. Students outside of USDA can contact NIMS.Training@usda.gov to request a copy of their course completion certificate.

f. MYTEP

The NTEP manager will create, publish, and maintain a MYTEP, projecting out 3 years and outlining the long-term preparedness strategy for the agency. This plan will be based on input from APHIS programs and will include details on course offerings through multiple providers, such as the NTEP instructor cadre, contracted training support, and cost-effective partner-sponsored training available to APHIS. The NTEP manager will also maintain the [NTEP SharePoint site](#) to advertise upcoming training opportunities identified in the MYTEP and recruit for the NTEP instructor cadre.

8. FORMS

- a. APHIS Course Roster
- b. APHIS Course Evaluation
- c. Instructor Application
- d. Instructor Credential Letter

9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Federal records created by this Directive must be maintained in accordance with the established [General Records Schedule \(GRS\)](#) and the [APHIS Records Management](#)

[Handbook](#), when applicable. If employees are named in an active litigation hold, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, and/or other action, those records, regardless of media, must be preserved and maintained in their native format until otherwise notified by your Agency Records Officer and/or the USDA Office of General Counsel.

- a. MRP Information Technology, Information Management Branch (MRP-IT, IMB) is the official recordkeeper of this Directive, which is currently unscheduled.
- b. ERCS' Emergency Management, Safety, and Security Division's Emergency Management Branch is the official recordkeeper of NTEP files and records. These records are currently unscheduled.

10. INQUIRIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- a. General inquiries concerning this Directive may be emailed to the NTEP manager at NIMS.Training@usda.gov.
- b. Records management inquiries should be directed to the ERCS Program Records Management Liaison (For current contact see [APHIS Records Liaisons](#)).
- c. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of this policy (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.), should contact the United States Department of Agriculture's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD) for assistance.
- d. This Directive can be accessed online via the [APHIS Issuance Web page](#).

/s/

Dr. Michael Watson

APHIS Administrator