



## **Thank You for the helping hands!**

By:

*Rich Woldt CPP, CFE*

*CEO: The Risk Management Learning Center*

*Licensed Private Detective*

Homeland Security Instructor - ACFEI – Level III

Instructor: Incident Command System (ICS) & National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Thank you Emergency Government, Law Enforcement, Fire Departments and Volunteers, Veterans, our business community, and all other responding agencies and residents for the helping hands you continue to offer the victims of Hurricane Katrina. You've all made us very proud! Katrina was, God willing, a once in a life time event for our country. She devastated over 90,000 square miles not once but in waves; starting with the wrath of a class 5 Hurricane, than levee breaks and "explosive" toxic waste water, than victim on victim aggression, public ridicule and the most unfortunate political finger pointing. What next? What went wrong? It will take years to sort it all out. For now, we must regroup, focus on rescues and recovery and move forward. I offer the following Incident Command System (ICS) update to help us regroup, fine tune our response and move toward recovery. Throughout the document, I've attempted to introduce procedures and processes recommended by the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Following their emergency operations plans, government officials surveyed the damage and set "the tone from the top" declaring the disaster and authorizing "whatever response assets were needed would be made available." Next, response personnel and resources were made mission ready and positioned in staging areas within striking distance yet out of harms way. This is where the process appears to have broken down. Some staging areas were not out of harms way and some found themselves incredibly short of resources, resulting in a breakdown in ordering and distribution systems. Not unlike 9-11, Katrina gave us an advance lesson in ICS Staging Area management. Responding to 9-11 we learned that rushing to respond endangers first responders and can destroy responder assets. We learned it again in Kentucky when a bogus anthrax scare eliminated over 30% of police, fire, and hospital response assets within 20 minutes because responders failed to follow what we now consider National Incident Management System (NIMS) procedures. Staging for a level 5 Hurricane requires greater geographical spacing than when staging for a localized tornado, flood, or terrorist attack.

The only villain in the Gulf was Katrina. She threatened, she pounced and she traumatized our country. If there is a bright side, she taught us much. Next time, we'll be more willing to evacuate. Next time we'll have more responders trained in the National Incident Management System. Before she returns we'll invest in environmental changes that might replace barrier reefs and we'll adopt construction standards similar to those upgrading buildings along the Florida coast and Federal buildings since the bombing in Oklahoma City. We Americans are a hearty bunch. We'll recover and move on. For now, let's be good to our neighbor's, good to ourselves and good to all those making a good faith effort on our behalf.

*Following with permission to reprint is our Risk Management Learning Center update on the ICS for Hurricane Katrina. (This can be downloaded from my RMLC web site)*

*Rich Woldt CPP, CFE*

*CEO: The Risk Management Learning Center*



This is a review of the Incident Command System (ICS) and The National Incident Management System (NIMS) response issues relative to Hurricane Katrina – *Issued by the Risk Management Learning Center*

9-11-05

Please use this review of ICS processes when briefing others and during changes in Unified Commands. Post it at your Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and reprint it as a training handout. Remember to begin your briefings and debriefings with a Thank You for a job well done! (Note: This handout can and should be personalized for your Community, County, Parish, Region, District, Municipality, and State recovery personnel.)

*Rich Woldt CPP, CFE, – Instructor: NIMS - Homeland Security – Contingency Planning, Security & Risk Management*

### **Response to Katrina – What went wrong?**

The finger pointing is a normal reaction during and after every traumatic incident. It's driven by the scope of the incident, number of victims, and perceived inability to respond as quickly as might be expected. Hurricane Katrina, while predicted days in advance, was no more expected by those choosing to stay in New Orleans than an earthquake is expected by those living in San Francisco. Those who think they could have done a better job evacuating New Orleans might consider an attempt to evacuate San Francisco before the next inevitable earthquake. There are still residents refusing to leave the flooded, toxic waste infected, gulf coast. *One of our first process improvements must be to update our national evacuation policies and procedures.*

### **Trauma Management – Principles, Performance, and Practices:**

Thank everyone for the helping hands they've extended to victims along the gulf. All responders need to hear: "Whatever you've done and continue to do is helping victims reduce their fear and guilt while they regain their sense of being in control over a very traumatic disaster." Remember, the universe of victims includes all children. Avoid focusing them on Katrina and when their in ear shot talk about the positive progress being made by rescuers and all responders.

Psychologists tell us the three emotions that impact victims during every disaster are guilt, fear, and a sense of being out of control. We all feel guilty when we see someone in need and can't reach them in time. This is particularly true for those responsible for a safe and healthy environment and the first responders called on to make quick damage assessments, estimate the scope of the disaster, and launch an appropriate response. It's also true for the volunteer or neighbor who loses a grip on a survivor at the last minute or the fireman who missed a victim during a frantic search. Victims also feel guilty when they're forced to leave family, friends and neighbors behind in harms way. Most Post Traumatic Stress suffered by war veterans can be traced back to the guilt they had when they were forced to leave a command under siege.

**So what's the cure?** What can we do to reduce guilt while encouraging process improvements? Surround yourself and others with non-judgmental listeners. Avoid those saying "You should have" or "Why didn't you!" Encourage those who are out of line to follow Incident Command System (ICS) recommended processes so their efforts will be more productive and benefit more victims. Be good to yourself. Compliment yourself and others while working through recovery. Learn from your experiences and share your experience with others. Remember, we are all in this together. We're all victims on our way to recovery.



Fear is driven by not knowing what to expect. As soon as possible, let the victim know help is on the way and what the next step might be to get them out of harms way. Give them something to do. Just saying, "Hold on!" or "Reach out!" let's them know what to expect and gives them a sense of being in control of their future. Think about the last time you worried about anything and how good you felt when you got some feedback about the situation. Continue to provide victims with feedback about the recovery process.

Our sense of being in control increases the more we're involved in our own recovery. Focus on keeping the victims involved in the recovery process. Most victims recover faster when they feel they are heading home with hammer, nails, and blue prints than when they're sitting in a recovery facility out of harms way.

*As you review the Incident Command System (ICS) structure and response processes, consider what you might do to reduce the trauma (guilt, fear, sense of being out of control) associated with Hurricane Katrina.*

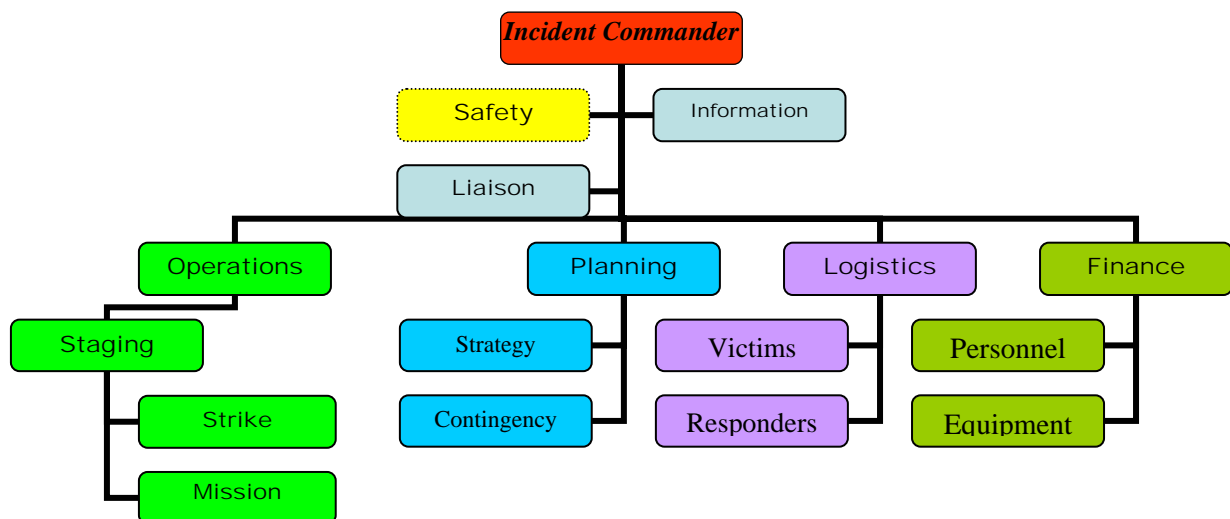


## The Incident Command System (ICS) & National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) are management systems that have been evolving since the 1940's. These systems were originally designed to manage the hundreds of diverse resources needed when fighting forest fires that spread across department jurisdictions and government boundaries. It soon became obvious as responding agencies specialized and communities signed a variety of mutual aid agreements that some pre-determined management structure was needed to reduce the confusion and trauma present during any response to sudden and unexpected events. NIMS dates back to the 1970's and soon after 9-11 the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Government adopted NIMS as a national standard. As it evolves it is becoming required training for all law enforcement, fire departments, emergency governments and Homeland Security personnel. While not required, NIMS will influence the anticipated response expected from our schools, hospitals, and communities at large in the future. The private sector through business and trade associations are encouraged to have at least a basic understanding of Incident Command System (ICS).

### The Concertina Effect:

Every incident has one "Incident Commander (IC)" who takes command when arriving on the scene. Most Incident Command System (ICS) trained agencies require the first responding officer to take command when making the first radio contact. The goal is to initiate the Incident Command System (ICS) quickly so if and when the incident grows all responders will know who is in charge and the Incident Command System (ICS) structure will easily expand. **Because the Incident Command System (ICS) is modular it can expand and contract as needed. This is referred to as the "concertina effect."** While the response might move from a Single Command to a Unified Command when the incident encompasses more than one agency, or more than one jurisdiction, or more than one level of government or any combination of these, there is still only **one Operations Section, Planning Section, Logistics Section and Finance Section.** The goal is for everyone to come to the incident with knowledge of the ICS so their Incident Commander can integrate his or her command into that of the governing Incident Commander. Following is the basic "Unified Command" structure used during the Oklahoma City bombing, WTC attacks, hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, fires, and terrorist attacks since the late 1980s.





***Incident Commander:*** There is one “Incident Commander (IC) for each incident so all coordination flows to one person authorized to act. The IC should be the one most familiar with the incident. If needed, the IC designates three Command Staff. “Safety” monitors the scene to ensure its safe and all responders are qualified, equipped and ready to roll, “Information” handles the media and makes sure everyone is informed of facts as they unfold. “Liaison” coordinates responding agencies when the IC moves from a “Single Command” to a “Unified Command.”

***Operations:*** Sets up staging areas to assemble response assets and coordinate personnel when the IC requests a “strike” or “mission” operation. For example, a SWAT team might have to strike first to stop a sniper, followed by firemen, EMTs, and transporters on a mission to rescue the injured, followed by engineers and contractors to rebuild the area. *The operations section carries out the tactics necessary to achieve the strategic objectives given by the incident command or unified command.*

***Staging Area(s):*** Staging areas are used to inventory response assets and assemble personnel at a safe and secure distance from the “Hot Site.” Staging areas are used to equip, coordinate, brief, and deploy response personnel.

***Planning:*** “Strategic” and “Contingency” planners write “incident action plan(s)” for the duration of the incident based on the incident goals and strategic objectives determined by the incident commander or the unified command. Based on damage assessments and reports from Operations, plans are written for the next operational period which may be 8, 12, or 24 48 hours. During major disasters such as the Oklahoma City bombing, 9-11, and Hurricane Katrina, long range recovery plans for the next 6 to 12 months might be proposed.

***Logistics:*** First determines where the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and Staging Areas should be located and than makes sure they are properly equipped and ready to occupy. This included providing appropriate table space for Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance, and other EOC personnel, a separate media briefing room and secured communication links. In addition to monitoring victims, Logistics is responsible to provide housing, food, training and incident supplies for all responders.

***Finance:*** Someone eventually will be asked to pay for the time, and equipment lost or damaged, personal injuries, property damage, etc. Finance is responsible for maintaining personnel records, negotiating mutual aid contracts, coordinating government assistance programs, and assisting with insurance claims and other financial matters requested by the Incident Commander.

**NIMS’ Response Processes:** Fast, effective, complete and successful recovery depends on an immediate response that’s appropriate to the incident. Following is a list of recommended action we’ve learned during our NIMS directed response to the Oklahoma City bombing, 9-11 terrorist attack, Hurricanes Ivan, Emily, and Katrina, Tornados in Wisconsin, a train wreck and BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vaporous Explosion), and earthquakes in California. Post them on your Operations board at the EOC:

***Note to reader: The following are provided only as a basic guide for those responding to Katrina. Any reference to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) published in March of 2004 is coincidental and is not implied to be NIMS adopted protocol but rater generally excepted Incident Command System response procedures.***



*Refer to Module 6 “Common Responsibilities” of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group curriculum for additional response recommendations.*

1. **Reporting Instructions:** Get ready, get set, confirm contact numbers with the EOC, (unless specifically assigned to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), resources will report to someone in the ICs structure rather than the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) but don't report to Operations until summoned by the Incident Commander. Too many, too much, too soon can add to the confusion, block critical equipment from reaching victims and waste valuable time and resources.
  - a. You'll be contacted by Logistics when they're ready for your arrival. When you're called, report to your assigned staging area with:
    - i. A printed inventory of recovery assets you've brought,
    - ii. a list of your qualifications, and
    - iii. personal identification, to include pictured IDs,
    - iv. list of medical limitations and
    - v. an adequate supply of medications for at least 14 days.
    - vi. You will be logged in, briefed and assigned to duties by the staging area Operations Chief.
2. **Dress For Success:** Personal preparation is most important. Depending on the nature of the incident, anticipated weather, climate, duration of the event, etc., pack:
  - a. Appropriate clothing, work shoes, gloves, eye protection, head gear, and personal items such as extra glasses, flash lights and batteries, water packs, back packs, sun screen, chap sticks, etc.
3. **Family Briefings:** Before leaving home, hold “Family Briefings” to ensure everyone is aware of where you're going, what you'll be doing, how to contact you while gone, and when you estimate you'll be home.
  - a. Arrange to call a designated telephone number that is equipped with an answering machine at a specific time each week to report your status to an adult family member.
4. **Transportation to Staging Area:** Unless instructed by Operations, plan to use provided transportation to the staging area. Avoid showing up in vehicles not specifically designed or equipped to be used by Operations. Car pool when possible to avoid adding parking, fueling, and maintenance concerns to Logistic
  - a. If your vehicle will be used by Operations, it will be inspected by security before being introduced into the pool.
  - b. Depending on its use (medical evacuation, mass transport, law enforcement, etc.) it will be logged into Operations, a vehicle ID and usage tag will be affixed to the front window (lower right) and assigned to a route.
  - c. If you'll be the driver, you'll also be searched by security and given an arm ban or ID badge.
  - d. Remember to bring extra copies of your medical limitations list and medications so Operations can respond to your special needs when requested.
  - e. Place confidential medical information in a sealed envelope with your signature over the seal. The envelope will only be opened if needed by triage personnel. You'll get the sealed envelop back when you log out of Operations.



5. **Law Enforcement:** If you're responding to Operations as part of Law Enforcement, be prepared to provide:
  - a. Identification, badges, rank, position, job experience, etc.
  - b. Also be prepared to brief the Operations Chief on your Department's policy regarding the "use of deadly force."
  - c. Also, have ready an inventory of weapons and specialty police equipment you plan to carry during any strike or mission during recovery.
  - d. Remember to bring extra copies of your medical limitations list and medications so Operations can respond to your special needs when requested.
  - e. Place confidential medical information in a sealed envelope with your signature over the seal. The envelope will only be opened if needed by triage personnel. You'll get the sealed envelop back when you log out of Operations.
6. **Fire Fighters and EMTs:** If you're responding to Operations as a fire fighter or EMT, be prepared to provide:
  - a. Identification, badges, rank, position, job experience, etc.
  - b. Also be prepared to brief the Operations Chief on your Department's policy regarding response processes and procedures.
  - c. Also, have ready an inventory of specialty fire fighting equipment you brought or are trained to operate.
  - d. Remember to bring extra copies of your medical limitations list and medications so Operations can respond to your special needs when requested.
  - e. Place confidential medical information in a sealed envelope with your signature over the seal. The envelope will only be opened if needed by triage personnel. You'll get the sealed envelop back when you log out of Operations.
7. **Transportation:** If you're responding to Operations planning to take part in "Transportation" or "Evacuation" be prepared to provide:
  - a. A pictured ID, driver' license(s) appropriate to vehicles you might be asked to drive (CDL, HAZMAT, etc.).
  - b. You will be briefed on evacuation routes and transportation procedures. **For example**, Operations might assign you to a counter clockwise route going one-way in and out of the "Hot Zone." Remember to stay far right to allow vehicles to pass on your left. Park close to curbside at loading points numbered to correspond to your vehicle.
  - c. Expect Transportation to be scheduling vehicle types along your route depending on victim needs. For example, your bus might be scheduled to follow an ambulance and a flat-bed truck will be scheduled behind you. The goal is to load injured first in ambulances, than elderly in busses and finally the more mobile on trucks.
  - d. If your vehicle breaks down, pull far right and flag down the next similar vehicle.
  - e. Use your cell phone or radio to report to Operations. Provide them with your specific location, the time, description and identification of your vehicle, your opinion of what's wrong, and any special victim needs. Request an estimated time when another vehicle will be dispatched.
  - f. **Caution:** There is an inherent danger when entering the Hot Zone with a vehicle desperately needed by victims during an evacuation. You will be



subject to intimidation and the possible hostile take over of your vehicle. Operations will attempt to anticipate such danger and provide you with an armed escort. However, should it happen, don't resist, but rather transport them as directed and report in as soon as possible to Operations. Your vehicle will have to be inspected for physical damage, biological hazards, etc. before being put back into service. Note, vehicles going into a hostile environment should be monitored by passive GPS tracking systems.

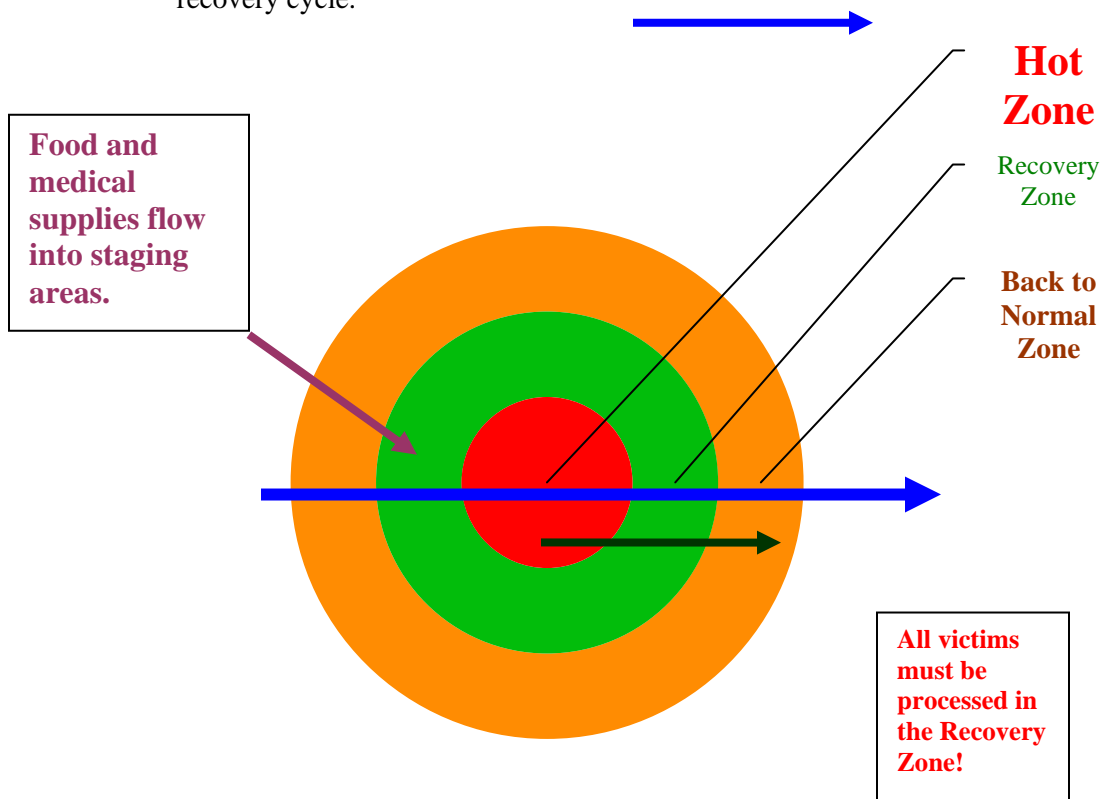
- g.* If you are forced to transport beyond designated routes or outside the recovery zone, report specific routes taken, stops made, businesses visited, etc., to Operations immediately. *Any vehicle or personnel leaving the Recovery area without being inspected poses a potential health hazard. Transporting victims, property or personal items from the Hot Zone without inspections and decontaminations significantly endangers anyone who comes in contact with your vehicle. It might be better to intentionally disable your vehicle than to allow it to be used.*
8. **Special Operations:** Includes SWAT, HAZMAT, Helicopter Rescues, Water Search and Rescues, etc. Special training is required to safely perform these operations. Report your qualification and experience to the Incident Commander and Operations Chief as soon as possible.
9. **Special Services:** Most disasters require the support of specials services such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters, tree trimmers, landscape architects, bankers, claim adjusters, etc. Report your special skills and talents to the Incident Commander and Operations Chief as soon as possible.



*Note to reader: Terminology used in this paper i.e. strikes, missions, hot zone, recovery zone, and back to normal zone are used similar to the site terminology used by fire departments when responding to a hazardous materials incident ( hot zone, warm zone and cold zone) or law enforcement response to a crime scene (inner and outer perimeter) etc. When sharing this information, use the terminology that best fits your incident command.*

**Mission Strategies:** The following mission strategies come from Operations during 9-11, Hurricanes Ivan and Emily, the Oklahoma City bombing, and various Tornado recoveries using the National Incident Management System.

1. Strikes and Missions should travel in and through the Hot Zone. On the inbound, in the **“Recovery Zone,”** rescuers are equipped, briefed, and made mission ready. After operating in the **Hot Zone,** they are debriefed, decontaminated, and provided rest and recuperation in the Recovery Zone before moving through the **“Back to Normal Zone”** and back into the recovery cycle.



2. During a NIMS Operation recovery personnel and assets are inventoried into and distributed from staging areas in the **“Recovery Zone.”** During evacuations, victims receive physical and emotional triage in the recovery zone before being temporarily relocated in the **Back to Normal Zone.**



3. All victims should be processed through the recovery zone so they can be tracked by the Red Cross. When they're cleared into the **Back to Normal Zone**, they should have pictured IDs, a record of medical clearance, and if time permits, a Law Enforcement back ground check. This will speed their integration into receiving communities and provide advance information for law enforcement, school officials, community leaders and neighborhoods preparing for their arrival. *Focus processing on medical needs first, than financial, and if time permits on social needs to include pre-qualifying children for schools and adults for employment.* The goal is to provide welcoming communities with as much as possible so they can meet the bus and welcome victims by name while handing them a schedule of settlement options. All this will add to the victim's sense of being in control, reduce their guilt for being dependent on strangers, and eliminate some fear they have of the future. Thank them for selecting your community and as soon as possible introduce them to business leaders and associations, veteran's organizations, social groups, etc. Get them involved in their own recovery through scheduled meeting on Katrina recovery efforts. Provide them with a list of all efforts being made within your community and put them in contact with the Incident Commanders for each group. You goal is to keep them in contact with their home town and ready them to return as soon as possible.
- ✓ **Keep standard Incident Command System (ICS) daily logs for future review and process improvement. As soon as victims are cleared into the "Back to Normal Zone," forward a copy of your tracking and victim clearing records to the appropriate State Incident Commander of Emergency Government.**



**Risk Management – Managing the “pure” and “speculative” risks created by any sudden, unexpected, life threatening event!**

**The Incident Command System (ICS) provides the structure and control needed to rescue victims and ensure an efficient response. How quickly victims are reached and how quickly they recover depends on the scope of the incident, percent of responders familiar with the Incident Command System (ICS), and your ability to manage the pure and speculative risks created by the incident.** Pure risks only create loss. Speculative risks offer a chance for gain but could result in a loss. For example, hurricanes, tornados, terrorist attacks, and auto accidents are all pure risk that when they occur result in both physical and emotional loss. Managing the risk of looters after Katrina is a primary reason victims refused to evacuate. The impulse act of giving after disasters increases your speculative risks. Expect increased internet frauds, credit card scams, phishing and pharming, attempts, money laundering, forgeries, and embezzlements. Expect criminals to play on your guilt, fears, and sense of being out of control to lower your defenses and encourage impulse giving. Share your knowledge of the Incident Command System (ICS) with your local law enforcement, fire fighters, schools, churches, and business community. **Encourage them to register all their efforts to assist victims with their local Director of Emergency Management.** That will help document their giving, place them in the national NIMS Operations Staging Area, and ensure the greatest benefits reach the victims who are most in need.

**Where do we go? What do we do? How do we get started?**

I suggest you visit the National Emergency Resource Registry at: <https://www.swern.gov/>.

Next go to the Red Cross web site at: <http://www.redcross.org/> and consider volunteering.

And then, visit your local Red Cross through: <http://www.redcross.org/where/chapts.asp>

to donate at: <https://give.redcross.org/donation-form.asp?hurricanemasthead>.

You can help victims locate family through: <http://www.familylinks.icrc.org/katrina>

You can gain more information about the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) at; [www.fema.gov/nims](http://www.fema.gov/nims)

*Visit any major news media and trade association web sites for links to victims in need. But, beware of criminal phishing and pharming. Phishing involves criminals placing look-a-like web sites on the web to capture credit card numbers and personal access codes they'll use to divert donations to their accounts. Pharming is an extension of phishing that leads you through a variety of links to their accounts.*



NIMS works for individuals, business, associations, groups, industries, communities, cities, counties, states, or countries. **Benefits include:** Better communications because everyone uses the same terminology and speaks the same “system” language. Operation’s missions are focused and effective. Planning ensures everyone is on the same page and moving in the same direction. Logistics ensures safety and appropriate care for responders, and Finance tracks the cost and ensures the bills will be paid. Complete recoveries depend on reliable communications, systematic planning, dependable logistics, and managed financing. The National Incident Management System works. Let it work for you! Share your knowledge of NIMS with others.

