



Final Report: National Incident Management System (NIMS) Reset

November 2024

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Introduction

In March 2022 the contractor Hillard Heintze presented the City of Minneapolis with *An After Action Review of City Agencies' Responses to Activities Directly Following George Floyd's Death on May 25, 2020*. Mayor Jacob Frey tasked the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) – later renamed the Emergency Management Department (EMD) – with developing and executing a City-wide improvement plan that responded to the After-Action Review (AAR) and its 27 recommendations.

In April 2022 OEM established an Improvement Plan that assigned relevant AAR recommendations to City departments under five broad strategies:

1. Assure corrective action is taken to implement the Emergency Operations Plan and the National Incident Management system – assigned to the Director of EMD.
2. Assure that corrective action is taken relative to leadership, procedures, and processes within the Minneapolis Police Department – assigned to the Police Chief.
3. Assure that corrective action is taken relative to leadership, procedures, and processes within the Minneapolis Fire Department – assigned to the Fire Chief.
4. Assure that corrective action is taken relative to connecting with the community – assigned to the City Coordinator (later renamed or designated as City Operations Officer, or COO).
5. Assure that corrective action is taken relative to public information and communication capabilities – assigned to the Director of the Communications Department.

EMD implemented Strategy 1 through a multi-year project called the “National Incident Management System (NIMS) Reset”. The objective of this project was to ensure the City’s capability of implementing the NIMS enterprise-wide, through a series of courses, training sessions, and exercises. The NIMS Reset culminated with City participation in the Integrated Emergency Management Course in March 2024. While EMD coordinated the NIMS Reset, it remained the responsibility of Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) and Minneapolis Fire Department (MFD) leadership to ensure that the appropriate capabilities were being developed and implemented at the incident command level.

EMD has presented periodic updates on the City’s progress throughout the NIMS Reset, as departments implemented the AAR’s recommendations. The updates have included presentations to the City Council and written progress reports, including this document which summarizes progress from March 2022 until the NIMS Reset project’s culmination in March 2024. This report is divided into three components:

- Part 1: A scorecard summary overview of progress on all AAR recommendations
- Part 2: Summary of the NIMS Reset
- Part 3: Recommendation-specific actions

References include the following:

- *An After Action Review of City Agencies' Responses to Activities Directly Following George Floyd's Death on May 25, 2020* (Hillard Heintze, 2022)
- *National Incident Management System*, Third Edition (FEMA, 2017)

Part 1, Scorecard

The following scorecard summarizes the status of the City's response to each of the 27 recommendations in the AAR. If the recommendation is addressed in whole or in part by the NIMS Reset project, it is noted as "Yes" in the right-hand column.

Recommendation	Assigned To	Status	NIMS Reset
1. Community Conversations	MPD	Complete	
2. Business Owner Forum	CPED	Complete	
3. Constructive Conversation Team	MPD	Complete	
4. MPD Leadership	MPD	Complete	
5. MPD/MFD Incident Command System	MPD, MFD	Complete	Yes
6. MPD Civil Disturbance Policy	MPD	Complete	
7. Incident Management Team	EMD, MPD, MFD	Complete	Yes
8. MPD Incident Command System Implementation	MPD	Complete	Yes
9. Staffing for Extended Operations	MPD, MFD	Complete	Yes
10. Less Lethal Munitions	MPD	Complete	
11. MPD Continuity of Operations	MPD	Complete	
12. Civil Disorder Resource Planning	MPD, PW	Complete	
13. Crisis Communication & Joint Information System	Communications Dept.	Complete	Yes
14. MFD Span of Control	MFD	Complete	
15. MFD ICS Implementation	MFD	Complete	Yes
16. Situational Awareness Communication	MPD, MFD	Complete	Yes
17. MFD Resource Tracking	MFD	Complete	Yes
18. Executive and Legislative Training	EMD	Complete	
19. Camera Control	MPD	Complete	
20. After Action Reports	EMD	Complete	
21. Emergency Communications Plan	Communications Dept.	Complete	
22. Crowd Control Training	MPD	Complete	
23. Training and Exercises	EMD	Complete	
24. Employee Wellness	MPD	Complete	
25. Investigations Surge Capacity	MPD (OPCR)	Complete	
26. Civil Disorder Public Protective Actions	City Coordinator, EMD	Complete	
27. Curfew Waivers	City Coordinator, City Attorney's Office, EMD	Complete	

Part 2, Summary of NIMS Reset

The AAR highlights the City's need to use the organizational systems mandated under NIMS, including the Incident Command System (ICS) to manage emergency responses. The overall goal of the NIMS Reset project was to establish the City's capability to use these systems. The City sought to achieve this goal by training staff, testing and exercising capabilities, and demonstrating that it could use NIMS to manage complex incidents.

The AAR documented a widespread lack of NIMS and ICS implementation in the City's response in May-June 2020. The findings focused on MFD's and MPD's implementation of ICS but also noted a lack of effective use of the City's Emergency Operations Plan, the Emergency Operations Center, and the Joint Information System. The AAR found that the City could not operate effectively across multiple operational periods of time. In response to these findings, the City determined that a "reset" of the NIMS was required.

Key AAR recommendations focused on the ability of MPD and MFD to have sufficient, trained command and general staff available to implement ICS. The trained staff should be able to properly implement ICS, including establishing command, creating an incident action plan, using the standard organizational structure, transferring command, and managing span of control in the Operations Section of the Emergency Operations Center. The AAR also noted the need to operate other aspects of NIMS, such as the Joint Information System and interagency coordination through the Emergency Operations Center.

While the AAR highlighted development of an Incident Management Team, staff also recommended focusing initially on building the necessary command and general staff capabilities within MPD and MFD. The decision to create an interdisciplinary and potentially deployable team has been tabled to a future improvement project.

The City has implemented corrective action that was tested at the Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) in March 2024. Preparations for IEMC included ensuring the following:

- MPD and MFD can implement single and unified command.
- EMD can implement the incident support function through the Emergency Operations Center.
- Communications Department can implement the Joint Information system.
- The Mayor, in conjunction with EMD and the Community Safety Commissioner, can implement the Multiagency Coordination (MAC) Group.
- All parties are jointly capable of establishing and maintaining the interface and interconnectivity between all command and coordination structures.

EMD coordinated the training and exercises needed to execute these responsibilities. The training components included the following:

- All awareness-level ICS classes, which are prerequisite to advanced command and general staff courses. These include ICS 300 *Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents* and ICS 400 *Advanced ICS*.
- Command and general staff training, which allows participants to implement lessons in a practical setting. This training includes a general overview of how the ICS is used in complex incidents as well as position-specific training for each of the relevant command and general staff positions.
- Unified command course, designed to create alignment across the team on how to execute unified command.
- Incident Command and Emergency Operations Center "interface" course, focusing on how Incident Command and the Emergency Operations Center work together in a NIMS framework.

The exercise component of the NIMS Reset was intended to provide interim tests of the improved capabilities as the City progressed toward the IEMC. Therefore, each structure of the Command and Coordination components of NIMS was tested individually and then in conjunction with key interconnected NIMS structures. MPD and MFD demonstrated competence in operating under single command and unified command. EMD demonstrated competence in operating the Emergency Operations Center. Incident Command and Unified Command demonstrated competence in establishing the interface between command functions and the Emergency Operations Center.

The end state of this effort was a demonstration of the City's capabilities at the IEMC.

Highlights of progress in 2022:

- Enterprise NIMS Training – EMD developed an enterprise-wide NIMS training policy and assessed current training against that policy across the departments which have primary responsibility for Incident Command and support (MPD, MFD, Public Works, Health, and EMD). This assessment identified personnel across all departments who needed new or refresher training. Much of the training could be accomplished through existing, online, independent-study courses. EMD asked participating departments to have employees complete this training no later than the first quarter of 2023. Two additional training courses – ICS 300 and ICS 400 – were available only as in-person sessions. EMD arranged for one session of each course to be offered to City employees, one in October 2022 and one in December 2022.
- Advanced NIMS Training and Exercises – EMD scoped, released, and evaluated a request for proposals for the training and exercises needed to complete the NIMS Reset. This included advanced training for command and general staff and for the Emergency Operations Center. The City Council approved the resulting contracts in December 2022.
- Command Policy Review – MFD and MPD reviewed their procedures to assure that they conform to NIMS as a precursor to participating in further NIMS training.
- Command and General Staff – MFD and MPD identified personnel to participate in the training and exercise sessions scheduled for 2023-24 and IEMC.

Highlights of progress in 2023:

- Enterprise Emergency-Management Familiarization – EMD launched an online, independent-study course for City employees, covering key principles of emergency management, continuity of operations, and personal preparedness.
- Enterprise NIMS Training – EMD hosted and facilitated multiple iterations of ICS 300 and ICS 400. Priority access to these opportunities were given to the teams participating in the NIMS Reset. Additional seats were made available to all relevant departments to enhance enterprise-wide incident command capabilities.
- Advanced NIMS Training and Exercises – EMD hosted and facilitated a series of training opportunities for personnel identified to serve in command and general staff roles. These included training sessions for the Incident Management Team, Incident Commander, Safety Officer, Public Information Officer, Liaison Officer, Operations Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, Situation Unit Leader, and Planning Section Chief. Other training and exercise iterations focused on single and unified command, including for fire and police roles and responsibilities, in addition to testing the capabilities of the Emergency Operations Center, MAC Group, and Joint Information System. All the NIMS Reset training and exercise sessions, as projected in 2022, were accomplished in 2023.

Highlights of progress in 2024:

- Executive Emergency Training – EMD facilitated training for senior officials on their role in supporting incident management within NIMS. The curriculum included the roles and responsibilities for executives, elected and appointed officials, City managers, and agency administrators; the NIMS management characteristics, the organizational structure of the Incident Command System, and the role of the Command and General Staff; and the interconnectivity between the MAC Group, Emergency Operations Center, JIC, and IC/UC.
- Emergency Operations Center Functional Exercise – A specific exercise was dedicated to testing the capability of the City to activate an Emergency Operations Center with Planning, Logistics, Finance, Operations, and Departmental Representative functionalities. The exercise encompassed the resource-request process, information-sharing protocols, interface with the other NIMS components, and common operating picture.
- Enterprise Exercise – All four NIMS components participated in a comprehensive exercise to evaluate the City's ability to conduct incident management within the NIMS framework. The exercise was independently assessed by a third-party contractor which provided guidance and recommendations to integrate into City's emergency-response procedures. This was the final preparatory exercise before the IEMC capstone.
- Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) – FEMA's Emergency Management Institute approved Minneapolis' attendance at the IEMC, which was conducted at the National Emergency Training Center, in

Emmitsburg, Maryland. The IEMC was a four-day, exercise-based event to practice a simulated, realistic crisis within a structured learning environment. Minneapolis selected civil unrest as the scenario to manage.

The IEMC included three days of briefings, skills improvement, and a series of tabletop exercises to hone incident response and NIMS components' integration. Participants also built functional familiarity and enhanced operational camaraderie. The course culminated in a functional exercise designed to validate participant knowledge, awareness, flexibility, leadership, decision-making, and interpersonal skills while in a simulated civil unrest environment. The Emergency Management Institute evaluated Minneapolis on the core capabilities of operational coordination, planning, public information and warning, and situational assessment. Specifically, the Institute validated that Minneapolis achieved the following objectives:

- To activate, establish, and maintain a Unified Command structure for a multi-day civil unrest event, develop incident objectives and an Incident Action Plan, and maintain situational awareness in accordance with NIMS.
- To staff a Level 1, full Emergency Operations Center activation to support a multi-day, multi-operational-period civil unrest event in accordance with the *Incident Support Handbook*. This included development and implementation of an Incident Support Plan, processing resource requests for operational periods, coordination of situational awareness among department representatives, and future support planning.
- To activate, establish, and maintain a Joint Information Center (JIC) that included interagency representatives and provided coordinated information and messaging for a multi-day, multi-operational-period civil unrest event in accordance with the *JIC Plan*.
- To establish a MAC Group that provided executive-level policy guidance and strategy across departments/agencies to support a multi-day, multi-operational-period civil unrest event in accordance with the *Emergency Operations Plan* and *Incident Support Handbook*.
- To share decision-relevant information about the civil unrest event across all NIMS components, in accordance with the *Incident Support Handbook* and the *Interim Operational Plan for Civil Disturbance*.

Part 3, Recommendation-Specific Actions

The following are department-level corrective actions to support the NIMS Reset, in response to specific AAR recommendations. They are grouped by strategy (see page 1, Introduction).

Strategy 1 – Emergency Management Department

Recommendation 7, Incident Management Team Personnel

The MFD and the MPD should designate an Incident Management Team (IMT) and assign command-level personnel to roles on the team. The IMT members should be well-trained in their specific roles and responsibilities. The MFD and MPD should be able to quickly activate the ICS when necessary.

Assigned to: EMD, MPD, MFD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: Members of command and general staff, or “IMT”, were identified by their respective departments in 2022 and attended relevant training and exercises in 2023. They were successfully evaluated on their ability to execute key tasks in support of ICS, in addition to fulfilling their individual roles such as Incident Commander or Liaison Officer.

Strategy 2 – Police Department

Recommendation 5, MPD/MFD Incident Command System

The MPD and MFD should renew their focus on adhering to the ICS and ensure both departments have enough command-level officers. The MPD and MFD must provide the necessary training and experience to facilitate an effective and efficient performance of the Incident Management Team (IMT) and to maintain a strong succession program among supervisors and command officers. The MPD should revise Policy MPD 7-905 Incident Command System by adding a statement that clearly describes the policy’s purpose and directs the MPD to adhere to ICS principles in an emergency or crisis.

Assigned to: MPD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: MPD participated in the NIMS Reset project throughout 2022-24 and addressed the operational elements of this recommendation. Policy 7-905 has been updated, adding a statement that clearly describes the policy’s purpose and directs the MPD to adhere to ICS principles in an emergency or crisis.

Recommendation 7, Incident Management Team Personnel

The MFD and the MPD should designate an Incident Management Team (IMT) and assign command-level personnel to roles on the team. The IMT members should be well-trained in their specific roles and responsibilities. The MFD and MPD should be able to quickly activate the ICS when necessary.

Assigned to: EMD, MPD, MFD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: After identifying appropriate personnel for the IMT in 2022, the individuals were trained in 2023-24 as part of the NIMS Reset project. They participated in the IEMC in March 2024 as a culmination of their training and exercises.

Recommendation 8, MPD Incident Command System Implementation

The MPD should create a formal mechanism for activating the ICS during major incidents. The mechanism should:

- *Clearly identify an incident commander.*
- *Create an incident action plan.*
- *Define operational periods.*
- *Create assignments for IMT members to lead sections including operations, planning, logistics, safety and finance.*
- *Clearly identify each section leader with signage in the command center so individuals can efficiently access these individuals.*
- *Include OEM representatives to provide coordination assistance.*
- *Regularly provide situational updates to the personnel in the field and to other City stakeholders.*
- *Define the process for integrating other City departments and mutual aid partners.*

Assigned to: MPD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: MPD participated in the NIMS Reset project, which addressed the operational elements of this recommendation. Policy 7-905 has been reviewed and addresses the noted recommendations.

Recommendation 9, Staffing for Extended Operations

The MPD and the MFD should ensure their operational procedures require when any transfer or replacement of IMT members occurs during a major incident, the outgoing member provides a detailed situational awareness briefing to the incoming member, detailing the activities of the previous operational period. Ensuring such an exchange of information helps with operational consistency and the sharing of pertinent operational information.

Assigned to: MPD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: MPD implemented standard operational briefs, based on lessons learned in the NIMS Reset project and requisite training. Best practices for IMT members, including shift-change briefs, were taught in ICS training and exercises facilitated by EMD in 2023-24 and were integrated into MPD procedures.

Recommendation 16, Situational Awareness Communications

The MFD and the MPD should develop protocols for disseminating situational awareness information throughout the departments during major operations and after major incidents.

Assigned to: MPD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: MPD routinely gives briefings to supervisors and officers before a large-scale operation begins, or once a given situation is stabilized to the point where one can be done. Briefings are delivered in person, or materials are sent via email when they need to reach a large audience. Event Action Plans (EAPs) and PowerPoint presentations are used as forms of information-passing, as well as radio communication for regular updates. Separate intelligence reports are written or included in the EAP, depending on the size of the event. The event/incident operational period determines the intervals at which information is disseminated. The Intelligence unit is utilized for intel gathering and organization of that information and is a source of dissemination as well.

Strategy 3 – Fire Department

Recommendation 5, MPD/MFD Incident Command System

The MPD and MFD should renew their focus on adhering to the ICS and ensure both departments have enough command-level officers. The MPD and MFD must provide the necessary training and experience to facilitate an effective and efficient

performance of the Incident Management Team (IMT) and to maintain a strong succession program among supervisors and command officers.

Assigned to: MFD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: Addressed in MFD Incident Command Standard Operating Procedure and Training topic – Civil Disturbance Standard Operating Procedure. MFD also has participated in the NIMS Reset project, which further fulfilled departmental needs for IMT training and experience.

Recommendation 7, Incident Management Team Personnel

The MFD and MPD should designate an Incident Management Team (IMT) and assign command-level personnel to roles on the team. The IMT members should be well-trained in their specific roles and responsibilities. The MFD and MPD should be able to quickly activate the ICS when necessary.

Assigned to: EMD, MPD, MFD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: After identifying appropriate personnel for the IMT in 2022, the individuals were trained in 2023-24 as part of the NIMS Reset project. They participated in the IEMC in March 2024 as a culmination of their training and exercises.

Recommendation 9, Staffing for Extended Operations

The MPD and the MFD should ensure their operational procedures require when any transfer or replacement of IMT members occurs during a major incident, the outgoing member provides a detailed situational awareness briefing to the incoming members, detailing the activities of the previous operational period. Ensuring such an exchange of information helps with operational consistency and the sharing of pertinent operational information.

Assigned to: MFD
Status: Complete

Addressed in the MFD Incident Command Standing Operating Procedure (Planning Section). This was further addressed by MFD participation in the NIMS Reset project.

Recommendation 15, MFD ICS Implementation

The MFD should develop and document internal triggers and protocols for when and how to implement the ICS.

Assigned to: MFD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: Addressed by Incident Command Standard Operating Procedure (Span of Control Section).

Recommendation 16, Situational Awareness Communications

The MFD and the MPD should develop protocols for disseminating situational awareness information throughout the departments during major operations and after major incidents.

Assigned to: MFD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: Addressed in part by the Monthly Training Topic Communication - Operational Updates (Updates/Swiftreach) and is additionally accomplished through email, video messaging, and text updates for off-duty personnel.

Recommendation 17, MFD Resource Tracking

The MFD should improve its tracking of its equipment and personnel by assigning personnel to engage in such an effort.

Assigned to: MFD
Status: Complete

Corrective action: Addressed in part by the MFD Communication - Fire Ground Accountability and also has been accomplished through the Computer Aided Dispatch system in 9-1-1.

Strategy 5 – Communications Department

Recommendation 13, Crisis Communication and Joint Information System

The City should develop a citywide crisis communications plan and response guide with instructions on responding to various scenarios. The plan and guide should instruct personnel to:

- *Leverage the use of social media and neighborhood groups' efforts to share information.*
- *Post video updates, photos and statements frequently.*
- *Keep the public informed about the status of the City's response to relieve anxiety, request assistance and correct misinformation.*
- *Conduct regular operational briefings with department heads, elected officials and key stakeholders.*
- *Conduct regular media briefings.*
- *Use clear and concrete language that demonstrates empathy.*
- *Provide practical advice to residents for what they can do during the crisis.*

Assigned to: Communications Department
Status: Complete

Corrective action: The NIMS Reset project accomplished this recommendation, including Public Information Officer training, a functional exercise to test the Joint Information System, and Incident Command and Emergency Operations Center interface training. The *Crisis Communications Plan and Response Guide* was completed, using best practices from NIMS, ICS, consultants, and crisis communications plans from around the country. Components of the plan include:

- Crisis Management
- Crisis Communications and Public Information
- Critical Incidents (OCS updates to follow)
- Response Guides for Typical City Scenarios
- Communications Strategy
- Joint Information System/Center Plan
- Communications Guidelines, Best Practices (including draft holding statements, multilingual communications, templates)
- Checklists, Guides, Worksheets
- Appendices (including Risk Assessment Analysis, ICS forms, current policies, procedures)