



FEMA

January 28, 2008

Ms. Elizabeth B. Armstrong
Executive Director
International Association of Emergency Managers
201 Park Washington Court
Falls Church, VA 22046-4527

Dear Ms. Armstrong:

Shortly after September 11, 2001, as part of the directives of the *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) then Office of National Preparedness (ONP) embarked on a number of projects to develop a National Incident Management System (NIMS) to improve emergency response preparedness and capability across the country. Two of the initiatives to support NIMS were the *National Mutual Aid and Resource Typing Initiative*, intended to define and categorize resources commonly exchanged in disasters via mutual aid by capacity and/or capability and the *National Emergency Response Credentialing System*, which will help verify the identity and qualifications of emergency personnel by job title responding to an incident. Both of these initiatives have the ultimate goal of assisting local and state emergency responders in more effectively acquiring outside resources through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) or other mutual aid agreements with known, reliable, measurable capabilities in catastrophic responses that exceed their normal capability.

For the past several years, eight functional area Working Groups consisting of Subject Matter Experts (SME) in the appropriate field have been endeavoring to qualify aspects of these initiatives. One of these functional groups is the Search and Rescue (SAR) Work Group. In late summer, this Work Group and other SME reviewers completed the latest drafts of both documents as they pertain to SAR resources.

As part of the next step in the evolution of these initiatives, the FEMA National Incident Management Systems Division would like to expand the review of the completed material and obtain comment and feedback so that organizations across the country will eventually adopt and implement these concepts for use in mutual aid responses. Your organization has been recommended as one with substantial knowledge in the search and rescue field and a vested interest in the final outcome of these initiatives.

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We would very much appreciate if your organization would review and provide any constructive comments that could be considered by the FEMA SAR Working Group as this process moves toward an eventual conclusion. We plan to have a 30-day period for interested organizations such as yours to review and provide comments on this latest version. All comments will be considered by the SAR Work Group and at the end of the 30 day period the SAR documents, with adopted changes, will be posted on the FEMA website for open public comment.

We certainly appreciate in advance any assistance your organization may contribute to this worthwhile product. We believe that at the end of this process we will have improved the capability of SAR responders nationally to respond to and operate in large scale, catastrophic events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Fluman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "F".

Al Fluman
Acting Director
Incident Management Systems Division
Federal Emergency Management Agency