
LOCAL/TRIBAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS (LT/IMT) IN WISCONSIN

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On behalf of the WI NIMS Advisory Group

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Emergency response services in most communities on a day-to-day basis are fairly short in duration and are handled locally. Every so often, assistance may be required from a neighboring community in the form of mutual aid for an incident that may be a little more complex and typically longer in duration, but not usually for more than a day. Then it happens, the “big incident” that quickly overwhelms even the most prepared community regardless of its size. It may be a tornado, flood, wildfire, public health emergency, civil disturbance, terrorism, or some other type of incident where the affected community needs a variety of assistance and needs it now!

History has shown during large catastrophic incidents, not only is the affected community dealing with the ongoing response to the event itself, but local officials must also manage

Southwest WI IMT Member, Rick Lange, providing communications support during an IMT deployment.



“convergence” on their community that always follows. This is often in the form of extended media coverage, large numbers of spontaneous volunteers, donations management, damage assessment, personnel accountability and security. On many occasions, this list gets even more extensive. While local, county and state emergency management officials provide much of this support, many emergency management and other officials have long recognized the need for a qualified “team” of individuals, who are trained, equipped and experienced that are able to deploy to an affected community to work along side of and for the local authority having jurisdiction by providing “on-the-ground” support

and services. To that end, many agencies and emergency planners in Wisconsin have come together to establish Local/Tribal Incident Management Teams (LT/IMT), also known as Type 4 Teams.

Typing of Incident Management Teams

The typing of Incident Management Teams closely follows those of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) level of incident complexity. Type 1 and Type 2 teams are organized and utilized at incidents of national significance, are the most robust and have members with exceptional qualifications, experience and training. These teams are mission equipped and self-contained. There are currently 16 Type 1 Teams in the US. Type 2

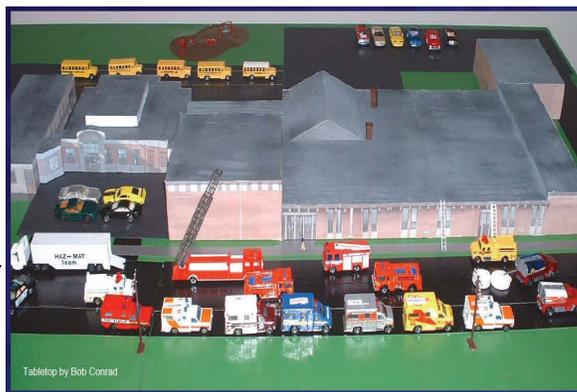
Teams are utilized on smaller-scale national and/or state level incidents with 35 Type 2 teams in existence.

A Type 3 IMT, often referred to as an “All-Hazards Team”, is used regionally most often within a state, at an incident that typically goes beyond one operational period. This team can be mission-tasked or team members can be utilized to staff field ICS positions at the Command and General Staff level where either local staffing is not available or in need of shift replacement. The Wisconsin DNR currently has 4 Type 3 IMTs organized by the Division of Forestry’s District boundaries.

Type 4 and Type 5 teams are referred to as “local teams” and are comprised of members from different departments, organizations or jurisdictions. Again, Type 4 and Type 5 teams are referred to as Local/Tribal Incident Management Teams (LT/IMT). In Wisconsin, there are currently four LT/IMT’s, three being regional and one comprised of the various tribal nations in Wisconsin. The three regional teams in Wisconsin are located in Southwest, Southeast and East Central Wisconsin with their primary jurisdictions following those of Wisconsin Emergency Management’s (WEM) regions. Several Wisconsin state agencies such as Transportation, Corrections, DNR, Agriculture, to mention a few, also have incident management teams. Both LT/IMT and state teams participate in statewide meetings, trainings and exercises to share best practices. All IMTs in Wisconsin have an established history of working together at actual incidents and pre-planned events.

Early LT/IMT Development

Waukesha County Technical College received a grant to research LT/IMT’s and provide a “template” that local jurisdictions could use in the development of local incident management teams. A group comprised of academia, law enforcement, fire, emergency management and other response professionals met for this task and in November 2008 produced, “*A Development Guide for Local/Tribal Incident Managements (LT/IMT)*”. This new development guide was intended to assist local interested organizations who were at “the starting point” for their team. Local teams were then encouraged to modify the development guide to fit their needs.



East Central WI IMT exercising preparedness utilizing a table top model city.

Mission and Scope of LT/IMT’s in Wisconsin

The mission of the LT/IMT in Wisconsin is to assist the local Incident Command, Unified Command, Area Command or other authority having jurisdiction with support to an incident or pre-planned event in an efficient and effective manner. The LT/IMT will accomplish its assigned mission by providing personnel who are qualified, trained, organized, equipped and prepared to support the affected jurisdiction.

Governance of the LT/IMT

Each LT/IMT has established a Governance Board who oversees the team’s processes, protocols, team’s readiness and ensures that the team follows the tenants of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The Governance Board is made up of designated representatives from key stakeholders and agencies, usually in the team’s jurisdiction.

While each LT/IMT works in concert with state and local authorities, the Wisconsin NIMS Advisory Council, as well as many of the first responder associations, the LT/IMT is solely responsible for their own affairs and governance.

Each team has an established Team Coordinator. This person(s) is responsible for all the administrative functions of the team including recordkeeping, scheduling, maintaining team rosters, training and qualification records of members, equipment inventories, posting of meeting agendas, preparation of meeting minutes, and other duties as assigned by the Governance Board.

All affairs of the LT/IMT are designed with the end user in mind, the affected jurisdiction in time of need. All members of the LT/IMT operate with the highest levels of professionalism, empathy, and teamwork.

LT/IMT Training Requirements

The whole intention of the LT/IMT, as stated above, is to provide a meaningful, value added service to a local jurisdiction in the time of need, at either an un-planned or pre-planned event.

To ensure that the team is operational ready, team members are required to complete ICS courses IS-100, IS-200, ICS-300, ICS-400, & IS-700. In addition, team members must attend and successfully complete the 40-hour Command and General Staff or equivalent training. To “round-out” the team member’s training, they are also required to complete G-191 ICS/EOC Operations, IS-775 EOC Management and Operations, G-290 PIO, IS-701 Multi-agency Coordination, IS-702 Public Information Systems, IS-703 Resource Management followed by G276 Resource Management.

The LT/IMT meets on a regular basis to maintain and enhance skill retention through remedial training, scenario based discussions, and exercising. Several teams have participated in local exercises such as exercise events with the Coast Guard, MABAS drills, SIMCOM, local community events, etc. The goal is to have as much training and exercise participation as much as possible in as many different scenarios as possible so team members can “hit-the-ground-running” providing immediate assistance needed without trying to remember what was learned in an ICS class they may have taken several years ago.



WI LT/IMTs participating in an exercise with Federal, State & Local agencies.

LT/IMT Request and Activation Levels

With each LT/IMT locally governed, request for and activation procedures will vary from team to team. Refer to the contact team information provided in this article regarding a LT/IMT in your area. Like all response organizations, familiarity and relationships are always important before the event. Take time to know your team, their capabilities and personnel.

Using the development guide discussed earlier, each team has essentially three levels of activation, 1,2 or 3. An **Activation Level 3** is a request for one to three members of the

team. For example, this type of request would be for a team member to complete or backfill an ICS position for the local jurisdiction such as a PIO or a Planning Section Chief to develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP) for the next operational period.

Activation Level 2 would be a partial team request (usually up to eight) to build a basic IMT structure necessary for a functional assignment such as resource tracking, documentation, etc. **Activation Level 1** would be for a full team deployment of approximately 15-18 individuals. Deployment would be for larger functional assignments such as spontaneous volunteer resource management, donations management, damage assessment, establishing or backfilling ICS positions in the Incident Command Post (ICP) or the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The LT/IMT is trained to work within the local ICS structure such as command staff, operations, planning, logistics, administration/finance, or the LT/IMT could work outside the local ICS structure as an Assisting Agency. In this case, the LT/IMT would be “connected” to the local ICS structure through the local Liaison Officer or to the Incident Commander directly.



DNR Incident Commander Steve Courtney giving a press briefing at the 3410 acre Cottonville Fire in 2005

Conclusion

We trust that you will contact your local LT/IMT and learn more. As any seasoned responder knows, when the “big-one” comes, well trained, equipped and organized teams are essential and LT/IMT’s in Wisconsin have been established for just such a reason.

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