Handout 1.1—Essential Records

PRIORITY FOR ACCESS*	ESSENTIAL RECORDS ARE RECORDS THAT:	EXAMPLES INCLUDE:
Priority 1: First 1–12 hours	Are necessary for emergency response	• Copy of emergency and/or Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan • Infrastructure and utility plans • Maps and building plans • Emergency contact information
	Are necessary to resume or continue operations	• Delegations of authority • Contracts and leases • Payroll • Prison, jail, and parole records • Insurance records
Priority 2: First 12–72 hours	Protect the health, safety, property, and rights of residents	• Deeds, mortgages, land records • Birth and marriage records • Medical records • Active court proceedings • Education and military service records • Voting records • Professional licenses
	Would require massive resources to reconstruct	• Geographic information systems data • Tax records
Priority 3: After first 72 hours	Document the history of communities and families	• Historical documents • Photographs • Identity records

- Only a small percentage (typically, less than five percent) of all Government records are essential
- Value during an emergency makes a record essential
- As disruption time increases, more records become essential
- "Records" can be in many different formats, including paper or electronic

* See **Handout 4.1**—Access Priorities Table for details on what is covered in each of these priority categories.

Handout 1.2—NIMS Resource Management Concepts and Principles

The **National Incident Management System (NIMS)** guides all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector in their efforts to "prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, in order to reduce the loss of life and property and harm to the environment." NIMS incorporates the following concepts and principles[1]:

1. CONCEPTS

The underlying concepts of resource management are as follows:

- **Consistency**—Provision of a standard method for identifying, acquiring, allocating, and tracking resources
- **Standardization**—Resource classification to improve the effectiveness of mutual aid agreements or assistance agreements
- **Coordination**—Facilitation and integration of resources for optimal benefit
- **Use**—Incorporation of available resources from all entities, where appropriate, in resource management planning efforts
- **Information Management—**Provisions for the thorough integration of communications and information management elements into resource management organizations, processes, technologies, and decision support
- **Credentialing—**Use of criteria that ensure consistent training, licensure, and certification standards

[1] This handout summarizes the NIMS concepts and principles presented in the ***National Incident Management System*** (FEMA Publication P-150, December 2008), *www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMS_core.pdf*

2. PRINCIPLES

The foundations of resource management are based on the following five interwoven principles:

a. Planning

Coordinated planning, training to common standards, and inclusive exercises provide a foundation for the interoperability and compatibility of resources throughout an incident. Jurisdictions should work together in advance of an incident to develop plans for identifying, ordering, managing, and employing resources.

b. Use of Agreements

Agreements among all parties providing or requesting resources are necessary to enable effective and efficient resource management during incident operations. This includes standing agreements and contracts for services and supplies.

c. Categorizing Resources

Resources are organized by category, kind, and type, including size, capacity, capability, skill, and other characteristics. This makes the resource-ordering and dispatch process more efficient and ensures that needed resources are received.

d. Resource Identification and Ordering

The resource management process uses standardized methods to identify, order, mobilize, and track the resources required to support incident management activities. Those with resource management responsibilities perform these tasks either at the request of the Incident Commander (IC) or in accordance with planning requirements. Identification and ordering of resources are intertwined.

e. Effective Management of Resources

Resource management involves acquisition procedures, management information, and redundant systems and protocols for ordering, mobilizing, dispatching, and demobilizing resources.

(1) Acquisition Procedures

Acquisition procedures are used to obtain resources to support operational requirements. Examples include mission tasking, contracting, drawing from existing stocks, and making small purchases. A key aspect of the inventorying process is determining whether an organization needs to warehouse specific items prior to an incident. Material resources may be acquired in advance and stockpiled or obtained “just in time” through appropriate pre-incident contracts. An integral part of acquisition procedures is developing methods and protocols for the handling and distribution of donated resources.

(2) Management Information Systems

These systems are used to provide decision support information to managers by collecting, updating, and processing data, and tracking resources. They enhance resource status information flow and provide real-time data in fast-paced environments in which different jurisdictions, emergency management and response personnel, and their affiliated organizations are managing different aspects of the incident and should coordinate their efforts. Examples of management information systems include resource tracking, transportation tracking, inventory management, reporting, and geographical information systems.

(3) Redundant Information Systems

Those with resource management responsibilities should be able to identify and activate backup systems to manage resources in the event that the primary resource management information system is disrupted or unavailable. Management information systems should also have sufficiently redundant and diverse power supplies and communication capabilities. If possible, the backup storage should not be co-located, and the information should be backed up at least every 24 hours during the incident.

(4) Ordering, Mobilization, and Demobilization Protocols

Protocols are followed when requesting resources, prioritizing requests, activating and mobilizing resources to incidents, and returning resources to normal status. Preparedness organizations develop standard protocols for use within their jurisdictions. Examples include tracking systems that identify the location and status of mobilized or dispatched resources, and procedures to demobilize resources and return them to their original locations and status.

Handout 1.3—Potential Candidates for Essential Records Status

Table 1: Potential Candidates for Essential Records Status by Category

CATEGORIES	SPECIFIC RECORDS
1. Proof of ownership by the agency	Property and equipment inventories; real estate records (titles, deeds); Accounts Receivable
2. Proof of monies owed to the organization	Accounts Receivable, contracts, leases
3. Fiscal obligations of organization	Accounts Payable, loans, and other fiscal obligations
4. Employee compensation and benefits	Labor contracts, payroll registers, insurance, and retirement plans
5. Records regarding physical plant	Engineering drawings, building plans or blueprints, equipment specifications, hardware inventories, civil defense plans, hazardous material inventories, etc.
6. Records relating to production or work product	Product processes, formulae designs, warehouse inventories, inventory controls lists, process specifications
7. Operating policies and procedures	Orders of succession, delegations of authority, staffing assignments, task specifications, policies and procedures manuals, directives
8. Records regarding computer infrastructure	System documentation and backups, software documentation manuals
9. Future directions	Strategic plans, forecasts
10. Past management	Board and executive meetings, reports, and official statements
11. Research findings and product development	Formulae, patent authorizations, product development plans, research and development (R & D) records, baseline data, specifications
12. Location of records	Essential records inventory lists; file plans and retention schedules
13. Records regarding the maintenance of public health, safety, and order in emergency	Emergency procedures, emergency contact lists, computer program documentation, disaster and emergency plans
14. Records needed to protect the rights and interests of individual residents or associations of residents	Legal records, identity documentation, voting registration lists, property titles, education transcripts, etc.

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Handout 1.4—Examples of Information/Records, by Function, That Might Be Designated as Essential

Note: *Many of these records may exist in more than one format—e.g., paper, microfilm, electronic versions, etc.*

Table 1: Key to Designations

ESSENTIAL RECORDS	OTHER RECORDS, NON-ESSENTIAL
1 = Emergency response; health, and safety of staff	6 = Important (30-year-plus retention)
2 = Necessary to resume or continue operations	7 = Useful (10–30-year retention)
3 = Health, safety, property, and rights of residents and the government	8 = Dispensable (less than 10-year retention)
4 = Require massive resources to reconstruct	
5 = Document the history of communities or families	

Table 2: Examples of Information/Records by Function and Designation(s)

ESSENTIAL RECORD TYPE	DESIGNATION
ADMINISTRATION	
Payroll	2
Correspondence of policy-level content by heads of major departments	5
Correspondence of transmittal, of thanks, information requests	8
Purchase orders	8
Insurance	2
Delegation of authority	2
Current ordinances, laws, policies, directives	2
Taxes (paid, unpaid, pending, abated, liens)	3, 4
Property value assessing	3
Computer program documentation	2
Computer system documentation, unpublished manuals	2
Office equipment inventory/repair records	6
Forms for applications, licenses, permits, tax payments	2
Annual reports summarizing the government's activity	5
Published manuals, procedures, reference material	7

Table 2: Examples of Information/Records by Function and Designation(s), continued

ESSENTIAL RECORD TYPE	DESIGNATION
COUNTY, CITY, TOWN CLERKS/REGISTRARS	
Minutes of meetings	2, 5
Birth and death certificates, burial permits, marriage licenses	3
Voter registration lists	3
Deeds, mortgages, land records	3
Licenses, permits issued/applications	3
Case files	3
Adoptions	3
Changes of name	3
Decedents' estates	3
FINANCE, TREASURY, ACCOUNTING	
Accounts payable and receivable	2
Bonds, notes	2
Capital assets	3
Audit reports	5
Audit, internal (working papers)	6
Budget, final official document	4
Budget, working files	6
FACILITIES, PUBLIC WORKS	
Building plans, existing buildings	1
Building plans, no longer owned	8
Infrastructure and utility plans	1
Maps (e.g., tax, roads, subdivisions, hazards)	1
EMERGENCY SERVICES	
Emergency Management Plan	1
Continuity of Operations Plan (contingency plan)	1
Essential records plans, locations of records	1
Emergency delegations of authority	1
Emergency contact information	1
E911 addressing data	1
HUMAN RESOURCES/PERSONNEL	
Employee contracts, status, benefits, retirement	2
Wage rates	2
Applications for employment, position pending	2
Applications for employment, position filled	8

Name(s): _____

Agency: _____

Table 2: My Agency's Essential Functions and Essential Records

TYPE OF ESSENTIAL RECORD	CORRESPONDING ESSENTIAL FUNCTION	ESSENTIAL RECORD	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR PROCESS
Records that are necessary for emergency response			
Records that protect the health, safety, property, and rights of residents			
Records that are necessary to resume or continue operations			
Records that would require massive resources to reconstruct			
Records that document the history of communities and families			