



## **Arizona Health Care Association DISASTER PLANNING AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GUIDE Nursing Home Incident Command System (NHICS) Activation Guidance**

The Nursing Home Incident Command System (NHICS) should be considered an essential component of a facility's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Proper utilization of NHICS requires that facilities provide its staff with comprehensive training and exercise of the system. NHICS is a resilient incident management model that will guide a facility on managing a situation, either emergent or non-emergent, in a consistent manner in accordance with concepts promoted by the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Activation and utilization of NHICS should be clearly defined in a facility's EOP. Regardless of the specific nature of the emergent or non-emergency event, it is recommended that the system be activated in the early stages of incident management to help ensure that a consistent process is utilized as the event either escalates or de-escalates in size, complexity and scope. Further, utilization of NHICS will help promote "interoperability" with the community's emergency responders (fire, police, EMS, etc.) as they also utilize a version of the Incident Command System (ICS) on all types of emergency situations.

Utilization of NHICS on smaller scale emergent and non-emergency situations that are reasonably expected to occur at any facility on a routine basis can help develop a consistent and disciplined approach to incident management. These events include but are not limited to:

### Emergent Events

- Fire alarm system activation
- Confirmed fire or smoke condition
- Power failure
- Severe weather of all types
- Prolonged weather- excessive heat and extreme cold
- Flooding- internal and external
- Mechanical systems failure
- Elopement / missing resident(s)
- Adverse event occurring outside of facility (police activity, haz-mat, etc.)
- Other threats consistent with the facility's Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA)

### Non-Emergent Events

- VIP Visits
- Large parties / celebrations
- Fire Protection or Life Safety Systems disruptions
- Training exercises / drills

When utilization of NHICS become part of a facility's emergency management "culture," it is likely that the system will be easily implemented on large-scale events that are typically associated with major disaster.