



## 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.