



23455 Currant Drive, Golden, CO 80401

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## Background

The All Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) program, often referred to as the Type-3 Incident Management Team (IMT) program, was initiated in 2003 by FEMA's Fire Administration, with the purpose of providing incident management assistance to complement and support the existing Incident Command System (ICS) organization for events that exceed local capabilities or other reasons."<sup>1</sup>

A Type 3 AHIMT, a multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional team, is used for extended, complex incidents. It is formed and managed at the local, state or tribal level and includes a designated team of trained personnel from different departments, organizations, agencies and jurisdictions.

Type 3 AHIMTs are deployed as a team of 10-20 trained personnel, representing multiple disciplines who have ample experience in managing major and/or complex disasters that require a significant number of local, state, or tribal resources. They manage incidents that extend into multiple operational periods and require a written Incident Action Plan. A Type 3 AHIMT may initially manage more complex incidents that later transition to a national level AHIMT.

This document describes how communities with AHIMTs have utilized their teams thus far in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic. These are best practices for consideration and do not constitute or should be considered guidance in any way. You can learn more about AHIMTs at [www.AHIMTA.org](http://www.AHIMTA.org) and at [https://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/imt/imt\\_overview.html](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/imt/imt_overview.html)

## Key Considerations

- AHIMTs are capable of a wide array of missions and are best utilized when managing a large number of resources are assigned to the AHIMT to complete a mission.
- AHIMTs bring the benefit of cross discipline synergy which enables better communication and collaboration across jurisdictional departments.
- AHIMTs employ advanced concepts of the Incident Command System. Through management by objectives, AHIMTs use a business process to organize and document incident related actions, decisions, and progress. This process helps organize the incident and helps to save lives, stabilize an incident, protects property, and the level of documentation assists in federal reimbursement in a declared disaster.

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<sup>1</sup>Eagle Systems and Services, Inc., Incident Management Teams Rapid Deployment of Training Focus Group Report (July 28, 2003), p. 15.



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- AHIMTs are involved in COVID-19 response across the country and at every governmental level.

### **AHIMTs Involved in COVID-19 Response**

- In the Northeast, a large jurisdiction AHIMT was tasked with protecting the workforce, ensuring continuity in the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supply chain, provide COVID-19 messaging to all employees, and maintaining a call center for all employees that its health services department placed into monitoring.
- On the West coast, an AHIMT was delegated authority to command, manage, and provide leadership for the COVID-19 containment, mitigation, and recovery within its county and was tasked with minimizing the exposure potential and overall impact to the workforce from COVID-19. Ensuring effective care of any employee infected by COVID-19. Providing timely and accurate information to all personnel. Forecasting potential contingencies and developing and implementing mitigation strategies for containment, mitigation, and recovery.
- A Midwest AHIMT was asked to establish a Multi-Agency Coordination Center intended to coordinate efforts and needs for hospitals within a five county area, the five county health departments, the state health department, and other key stakeholders. The AHIMT was tasked with
  - Sharing situational awareness and technical guidance;
  - Developing or providing guidance for the public, healthcare providers, local health departments, laboratories, EMS, and other first responders;
  - Assisting with requests to coordinate person under investigations with healthcare providers and local health departments;
  - Assisting with laboratory sample collection, shipping, and transportation for testing for COVID-19;
  - Assisting in providing guidance to healthcare facilities on contingency and crisis strategies in the event of a patient surge and resource shortages
  - Developing strategies with local law enforcement to respond to events of civil unrest created by COVID-19;
  - Assisting in updating a district fatality response planning and implementation;
  - Supporting the establishment of a Joint Information Center, and
  - Soliciting, receiving, tracking, and reallocating donated PPE to hospitals, healthcare facilities, and emergency responders.
- A small jurisdiction on the West coast had an AHIMT that was tasked with managing the entire city response to COVID-19 and implemented safety precautions and guidance for all city employees. Their objectives included:
  - Provide for the health and safety of the public, first responders, and city employees;



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- Provide emergency response services and essential city services within the COVID-19 guidelines;
- Provide the community with current and accurate information, and
- Ensure fiscal responsibility through established municipal guidelines and the completion of documentation for cost recovery under public assistance.
- Another AHIMT was activated early in the COVID-19 response and was tasked with supporting the needs of the Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Coast Guard in relation to a cruise ship docking in a port with COVID-19 related patients. The team also developed plans for quarantine and isolation facilities. The AHIMT created personal protective kits for all first responders and created sanitation stations for all police and fire facilities. The team also prepared a warehouse in preparation for the receipt of Strategic National Stockpile supplies.
- In the South, a state had nearly 20 different teams supporting local, regional, and state missions pertaining to the COVID-19 response in 29 jurisdictions.

### **Preliminary Best Practices Related to COVID-19**

- Developing and maintaining an AHIMT provides a jurisdiction with a versatile resource that can be tasked with a number of various missions in support of an incident that has a wide range of effects upon all disciplines within the community.
- An AHIMT can be used in the preparation and operation of a logistical staging area or warehouse managing and distributing critical resources and supplies such as the strategic national stockpile, donated goods, or mass purchased supplies.
- An AHIMT can be utilized as a catalyst organization to bring different disciplines together and to develop discipline specific COVID-19 safety guidelines and standard operating procedures to be followed by various stakeholders including police, fire, EMS, and healthcare workers.
- An AHIMT can be utilized to plan actions and document decisions and actions. The Incident Action Plan documents planned activities. The ICS 213 form documents purchases and orders. The ICS 211 documents personnel checked into an incident. The ICS 214 form documents individual actions, agreements, decisions, and activities. All of these are filed by the incident Documentation Unit Leader. This level of documentation improves a jurisdictions ability to be reimbursed under public assistance.