



Q 1. What is IPWMAN?

- A.** The Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network (IPWMAN) provides a formalized system for government agencies to enter into a written mutual aid agreement to provide and receive emergency assistance in the event of natural or man-made disasters or other situations that require action or attention beyond the normal capabilities of an agency. This organization embodies the concept of “community helping community” by providing an organized process for response to an emergency. An agency requesting assistance receives the type of equipment, materials and personnel services that are needed to react to the event.

Q 2. What is the purpose of the Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement?

- A.** The formation of IPWMAN complies with criteria established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for recognizing the eligibility of costs under the Public Assistance Program incurred through mutual aid agreements between applicants and other entities. (*FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy Number DAP9523.6, August 13, 2007*) IPWMAN provides a network to help others with personnel, equipment, materials and other resources for natural and man-made disaster response.

Q 3. Who can belong to this organization?

- A.** This organization was formed to coordinate resources for local municipal public works departments, public water agencies, public waste water agencies, township road districts, unit road districts, county highway departments and any other governmental entity that performs a public works function as they respond to emergency situations.

Q 4. Does my agency have the legal authority to become a member?

- A.** The Illinois Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, 5 ILCS 220/1 et seq., provides the basic legal authority for units of local government to contract with other units of government. Please consult your agency’s legal counsel for detailed legal advice.

Q 5. What are the benefits of belonging to this organization?

A. Members of IPWMAN –

1. In an emergency, members receive assistance from other members with appropriate resources. There is no cost for the first five days of assistance.
2. Provide a network of responding agencies with more diverse resources.
3. Have access to various resources for all areas within the state, not just limited to the areas in close proximity to the event.
4. Promote educational workshops and training to prepare agencies for emergencies and disasters
5. Have a membership agreement that provides reimbursement protocols after the first five days or if the disaster becomes eligible for FEMA or IEMA aid.
6. Have a defined operation plan that expedites the arrival of aid.
7. Have access to a list of emergency contacts.
8. Have added peace of mind knowing that your community has access to aid during time of need when local resources are overwhelmed.

Q 6. How does an agency request aid?

- A.**
1. In the event of major incident disaster:
 - a. The requesting agency assesses the extent of the event to determine what type of assistance is needed.
 - b. The requesting agency contacts its accredited Emergency Management Agency Coordinator to request needed assistance.
 - c. The Emergency Management Agency Coordinator will contact member agencies to secure the requested resources.
 2. In the event of a local emergency:
 - a. The requesting agency assesses the extent of the event to determine what type of assistance is needed.
 - b. The requesting agency contacts the organization's Call Center to request assistance.
 - c. The organization's Call Center sends the request to member agency and coordinates response.

Q 7. What is the difference between a major incident and a local emergency?

- A.** A major incident is a natural or man-made event that has widespread impact upon your community. Examples include tornados, ice storms with significant damage to utilities and public property, floods, wind storms, widespread damage from explosions or chemical spills as may result from railroad, freight or industrial accidents, and terrorist caused incidents.

A local emergency is an event that may have limited geographical impact requiring a response that exceeds the capacity of local agencies to respond. Examples may include large sewer, water main or pipeline collapses, bridge collapses, or an unusual event that requires specialized equipment for response that is not available locally.

Q 8. Does an agency have to respond to a request for assistance?

- A. No. The idea behind the mutual aid agreement is that we are here to help each other when an unusual situation needs an immediate response beyond our resources. There will be times when an agency may call for assistance, but another neighboring agency is unable to respond. They may be experiencing effects of the same disaster events, or may be fully committed to other work, or may not be in the financial position to assist. The mutual aid agreement does not obligate any agency to respond, nor does it require an explanation as to why it chose not to respond.

Q 9. What if an agency responds and needs its resources back?

- A. An agency is not expected to send resources if it impacts its own ability to effectively manage daily operations or response to its own emergency. Resources remain under the authority of the responding agency and can be recalled at any time.

Q 10. What happens if one of my agency employees gets hurt while rendering aid to another agency?

- A. Each member agency remains fully responsible for their employees. This means that each agency will pay their employees salary, benefits, insurance and provide liability coverage. Should a disaster become eligible for IEMA or FEMA reimbursement, these costs may be paid by FEMA.

Q 11. How long must I provide assistance if deployed?

- A. There is no obligation to respond. However, we ask that responding agencies put in at least one full work day. The total length of your response may be as long as the requestor needs assistance or as long as you can help, whichever is less. If you need to bring your resources home, you always have the right and authority to do so under the IPWMAN agreement.

Q 12. If an agency responds to a request for assistance, will that agency receive reimbursement?

- A. The intent of “mutual aid” is that we help each other. We have the same relationship with each other—“If I need help, you will help me; if you need help, I will help you.” The original premise of the mutual aid movement was that we helped each other without the thought of getting paid. Based on the principle of neighbor helping neighbor, no financial reimbursements will be paid to the responding community for the first 5 work days of assistance. (There is one exception to this principle that will be explained later.) In other words, the first 5 days of help are free.

Q 13. Why are the first 5 days free? What happens after the first 5 days?

- A. In the past, agencies operated with the understanding that the responding agency would not seek reimbursement from the agency requesting assistance unless the requesting agencies received state and/or federal assistance. That type of understanding is no longer possible. Under current federal guidelines, reimbursement cannot be contingent upon receiving state

or federal assistance. Thus, IPWMAN is faced with a dilemma. If a responding agency does not bill the requesting agency for its personnel, equipment and materials, the responding agency may not receive funding from FEMA for work performed by the neighboring community. If the responding agency does bill the requesting agency, that agency may be pushed into further economic hardship as a result of a disaster that didn't qualify for state or federal assistance. Also, it was learned that bills submitted with "a wink and a nod" to informally indicate that the bill need not be paid will receive the same response from FEMA – they won't get paid. The agency plans to check past practice to verify performance on written agreements.

As a compromise, IPWMAN (with the assistance of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency) proposed a plan for reimbursement that will benefit both the requesting party and the responding party. Under the IPWMAN agreement, the responding party will provide personnel, equipment and materials for the first five (5) days of the event without reimbursement. If the requesting party requires assistance longer than five days, the responding party will bill the requesting party.

The value of donated assistance helps the community requesting help in a second way: The value of the unpaid assistance may be credited to the requesting agency as part of the non-federal cost share of the requesting agency's emergency work under the provisions of Disaster Assistance Policy #9525.2., entitled "Donated Resources."

FEMA reimbursement may apply **only** after a Presidential declaration of emergency and the following eligibility requirements:

1. The assistance must be requested by the agency in need;
2. The work performed, supplies used and materials consumed are directly related to the disaster and is otherwise eligible for FEMA assistance;
3. The entity can provide documentation of rates and payment for services, if requested; and
4. The agreement is written and was in effect **prior** to the disaster.
5. **The One Exception: If an agency responds to a request for assistance made by the State of Illinois, the agency will be reimbursed from the first day of response.**

Q 14. Can the responding party be forced to work at a location other than where they were originally deployed?

A. No. Although there may be times when a responding party may be relocated to better utilize the resource, the responding agency may refuse to go there.

Q 15. What if an agency is part of another mutual aid agreement? Is that agreement nullified by signing this organization's Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement?

A. Signing the Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network Agreement does not invalidate any other mutual aid agreement. Signing the IPWMAN agreement should increase the resources available to the agency during an emergency situation.

Q 16. Is there a fee for membership?

A. Yes. IPWMAN dues are a necessity to enable the organization to cover the operating costs for processing applications, maintaining resource records and updating and maintaining our website and to provide support for the IPWMAN dispatch center and costs to sustain the operation of the network. The dues paid by an agency are based upon the population of the area the agency serves. Currently, the dues have been established to be:

- \$100 for agencies with a population of 15,000 or less
- \$250 for agencies with a population between 15,001 and 75,000
- \$500 for agencies with a population greater than 75,000.

Q 17. What does an agency need to do to become a member?

A. To become a member of IPWMAN, an agency must submit the following documents:

1. A signed copy of an ordinance, resolution or other legally binding document authorizing the agency to enter into the IPWMAN Mutual Aid Agreement,
2. A signed copy of the IPWMAN Mutual Aid Agreement,
3. A completed application form,
4. A list of mutual aid resources submitted to its local accredited/certified Emergency Management Agency, and
5. Payment of dues.

Q 18. My agency is not NIMS compliant at this time. Does this make a difference? Can my agency still become a member?

A. Yes, your may become a member. However, should a disaster become eligible for IEMA or FEMA reimbursement, your organization may not be eligible to receive reimbursement unless you are NIMS compliant.

Q 19. My county is a member. Do I need to become a member to get help?

A. Your county can assist you. To request aid from Illinois PW-MAN for your organization, you need to be willing to provide aid to others who may need help and therefore your organization should be a member of Illinois PW-MAN.

Q 20. Where can my agency obtain more information about IPWMAN?

A. You can obtain a copy of the membership agreement, by-laws, operation plan and other information from the Illinois Public Works Mutual Aid Network website. The web address is:

www.ipwman.org