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Standard Guide for Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Management[1]

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides general guidelines for the management of an emergency operations center (EOC) prior to, during, and after activation for emergency or disaster support.

1.2 An EOC is where the coordination of response and recovery support is performed, but the EOC is also a physical location that generates its own demands. For the EOC team to perform effectively, the physical and organizational demands of the EOC as a facility must be met. EOC management is distinct from the operational management of the incident.

1.3 This guide may also serve as a foundation for management of a smaller facility such as a department operations center (DOC), larger facilities such as a regional operations center (ROC), or state operations center (SOC) with a broader area of responsibility and more extensive need to communicate and coordinate with others.

1.4 This guide applies to fixed facilities and does not specifically address portable or field-deployable EOCs at temporary locations, virtual EOCs using communications technology to link geographically separated participants, or EOC relocation under a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). However, elements within this document will apply to these situations.

1.5 This guide is the second in a series regarding the EOC. For the Standard Guide for EOC Development, see Guide E2668.

1.6 This document includes some references and terminology specific to the United States of America but may be adapted for use elsewhere.

1.7 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.8 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*[2]

E2668 Guide for Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Development (Withdrawn 2019)[3]

2.2 *NFPA Standard:*[4]

NFPA 1600 Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs

NFPA 1561 Standard of Emergency Services Incident Management System

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *authority having jurisdiction (AHJ), n*—the organization, office, or individual responsible for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure.

NFPA 1561

3.1.2 *EOC Coordinator, n*—individual with responsibility for managing the EOC facility, systems, and procedures during activation of the EOC.

3.1.3 *EOC Planner, n*—individual with responsibility for managing and developing the EOC facility, systems, and procedures prior to activation of the EOC (that is, during day-to-day operations).

3.1.4 *EOC team, n*—the staff occupying the EOC for the purpose of coordinating response and recovery operations.

3.1.5 *established EOC, n*—facility temporarily created to manage or coordinate emergency operations or like functions.

3.1.6 *standing EOC, n*—existing fixed facility that serves as a location for entities to manage or coordinate emergency operations or like functions.

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[2] For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

[3] The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

[4] Available from National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471, http://www.nfpa.org.

3.2 *Acronyms:*

3.2.1 *AHJ*—Authority Having Jurisdiction

3.2.2 *COOP*—Continuity of Operations Plan

3.2.3 *DOC*—Department Operations Center

3.2.4 *EOC*—Emergency Operations Center

3.2.5 *EOP*—Emergency Operations Plan

3.2.6 *NFPA*—National Fire Protection Agency

3.2.7 *ROC*—Regional Operations Center

3.2.8 *SOC*—State Operations Center

3.2.9 *SOG*—Standard Operating Guide

3.2.10 *SOP*—Standard Operating Procedures

4. Summary of Guide

4.1 EOC management falls into two general areas: management of the physical facility and management of the systems and procedures that support EOC functions. Facility management focuses on the physical plant, technology systems, and support services needed to maintain these systems. Operational support management addresses the procedures for performing common tasks and operating EOC systems during activation. These two management areas work together to provide an environment that allows the EOC team to focus on the incident with minimal disruption.

4.2 Further complicating EOC management is that the EOC operates differently during activation for an incident than it does on a day-to-day basis. The normal day-to-day operation of the EOC is much like any other office building. Many EOCs are multi-use facilities used for other purposes on a routine basis and converted to an EOC when necessary. However, EOCs must also be capable of sustained 24-h operation, which significantly alters the delivery of support services and places high demands on the facilities.

4.3 This guide provides guidance for facility and operational support management of an EOC under daily and activated conditions.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Coordination of response and recovery support cannot be performed well if the EOC team lacks an appropriate operating environment. An operating environment that increases stress in staff or hinders the ability to perform basic tasks will ultimately degrade the effectiveness of the EOC team. EOC management must be accomplished in parallel with incident management support and should be transparent to the EOC team. EOC management must also be consistent with and support the incident management system used by the EOC team (for example, the Incident Command System mandated for use in the United States under the National Incident Management System). Effective EOC management can be attributed to good preplanning and related training. This guide provides the emergency management community with practical concepts and approaches for effective EOC management.

6. Roles

6.1 EOC management can be divided into three basic phases: pre-activation, activation, and post-activation. Tasks performed during the pre-activation phase maintain the EOC facility and systems and prepare them to support activation. Tasks in the activation phase support the EOC team in conducting response and recovery coordination. The tasks performed during the post-activation phase restore the EOC to a condition to support activation.

6.2 Part of the complexity of EOC management is that these tasks fall into a number of different areas of expertise and can require different skill sets. Consequently, it is easy for critical tasks to be overlooked or not considered if there is no central point of coordination. It is essential, therefore, to designate a lead for each phase of EOC management. Depending on the organization, this could be a single individual or a separate individual could be assigned for each phase.

6.3 For clarity, this document uses the term “EOC Planner” to identify the individual overseeing the pre- and post-activation phases and the title “EOC Coordinator” for the individual overseeing the activation phase. The actual duties and title for these positions will be determined by the AHJ.

6.4 These roles could be performed by the same individual, that is, a person could be responsible for day-to-day EOC management during the pre-activation phase and then assume the operational position of EOC Coordinator upon activation. The roles could also be split among multiple personnel. For example, in addition to having a planner for the EOC facility, the entity could assign the responsibility for development of EOC procedures and EOC activation to a watch officer or use an on-call duty officer to activate the EOC. EOC management roles should be adapted as needed to meet operational needs. For example, a large EOC may have a weekday EOC Planner, multiple EOC Coordinators during operational periods, and 24-h EOC support staff. A small EOC operation may have a part time EOC Planner who activates as EOC Coordinator for the day operational period, and a trained volunteer as EOC Coordinator for the night operational period.

6.5 The EOC Planner and Coordinator do not necessarily need to perform or directly oversee the various tasks related to EOC management. These tasks may require other technical disciplines or be the responsibility of other supporting departments or agencies. Instead the EOC Planner/Coordinator ensures that these responsibilities are performed and integrated with each other.

6.6 The EOC Planner is an administrative position with responsibility for preparing the EOC facility, systems, and staff for activation. The position may be either a dedicated full or part-time position, or assigned as an additional duty. The EOC Planner ensures the EOC facility is ready for activation, complete with the emergency plans, technology, documentation, standard operating procedures (SOP) or guidelines (SOG) and other tools needed to support EOC operations.

6.6.1 This role may vary greatly from one EOC to another, and should be clearly defined by the AHJ.

6.6.2 The EOC Planner should be familiar with best practices for EOC site selection, design, construction, and other issues related to the development of an EOC. There may be opportunity to propose and implement some of the information presented in Guide E2668.

6.6.3 The EOC Planner should be familiar with best practices for continuity of operations and incorporate these practices into EOC planning.

6.6.4 The EOC Planner should be familiar with the entity's emergency operations plans and the organizational structure used by the EOC team.

6.7 The EOC Coordinator is activated as part of the EOC team, usually as part of the EOC's Managers staff, with responsibility for coordinating support to the EOC team and managing the facility during activation of the EOC.

6.7.1 The responsibility granted to the EOC Coordinator position may vary greatly from one EOC to another, and should be clearly defined by the authority having jurisdiction and documented appropriately (for example, plans, policies, delegation authority, etc.).

6.7.2 The EOC coordinator should be familiar with the entity's emergency operations plans and the organizational structure used by the EOC team.

6.7.3 The EOC Coordinator should have access to the various plans, documents, records, supplies, communications, and other tools used by the EOC team during activation.

6.8 The EOC Planner or the EOC Coordinator, or both, may need additional staff to support their activities. Sources for such support staff may include trained volunteers. The type, complexity, and length of the incident will help determine increases and decreases in the need for EOC staff.

7. Pre-Activation Responsibilities

NOTE 1—The following are the primary responsibilities of the EOC Planner. The EOC Planner does not necessarily need to perform or directly oversee these responsibilities. He or she should ensure that these responsibilities are performed and integrated with each other.

7.1 *Operational Planning*—Operational planning for the EOC team may or may not be part of the direct duties of the EOC Planner. However, it is critical that the layout and systems of the EOC be configured to support the incident management system used by the team. Consequently, the EOC Planner must be familiar with the incident management system and the relationships between various organizational elements under the system.

7.2 *Financial Authorities*—The EOC Planner should identify any legal authorities that allow for access to emergency funding or waive normal business requirements such as the elimination of the need for competitive bidding. There may also be the need to establish special financial accounts or cost codes, or both, at the time of activation to track operational costs. The EOC Planner should ensure that mechanisms to implement these authorities and track costs have been established, coordinated with operational planners, and are available to the EOC Coordinator upon activation.

7.3 *Technical Planning*—While most of this function is performed during development of the EOC, there is a continuing need to upgrade, integrate, replace, or add new equipment and systems. New systems have the potential to cause technical problems within the EOC if not properly planned for and integrated. This is particularly true of information technology and communications systems. New systems may also have an impact on related inventory, such as different printer cartridges being needed for new printers or updates being performed on cache computers. There may also be a need for new or modified service and maintenance agreements.

7.4 *Maintenance and Repair Program*—Many EOC systems require regular testing and maintenance to remain mission capable. There should be a formal program to address these needs and any equipment in inventory. This program should include 24-h emergency contact information for those who provide these services. Some equipment, such as amateur radio, require specialized licenses for testing.

7.5 *Facility Services*—The EOC requires support services such as utilities, janitorial and security. For example, janitors usually clean in the evening after hours. In a 24-h operation, this one-time cleaning may not be sufficient and standard cleaning may be disruptive to operations. EOC contracts should have provisions specifying how service is to be provided during activation. These services should be capable of being modified during activation of the EOC. Modifications to EOC contracts can be preplanned as emergency clauses in contracts or may be setup as standby contracts.

7.6 *Facility Use Scheduling*—When an EOC is activated in a multi-use facility, specific areas will be re-designated from their normal use for EOC operations or support functions. Daily schedules must be able to be rapidly changed to accommodate EOC activation. Schedules should be accessible and provide 24-h contact information to cancel or relocate pre-planned events.

7.7 *Supplies Management*—While initial stocked supplies should be available for 72 h or more, a surge of personnel may use supplies faster than anticipated. A plan should be in place to inventory and coordinate resupply during activation and to restock in the post-activation phase. This would include items such as stored water and rations, equipment and parts, and sanitary, medical, office, and laundry supplies. Items with a shelf life need to be monitored and replaced when expired.

7.7.1 Storage site selection should consider, at minimum, incident vulnerability, ease of access from the EOC, any backup for power as needed, and site security.

7.7.2 Some items, such as generator fuel, may require separate storage for safety. Others, such as rations, may require special storage that meets local health regulations for temperature and pest control.

7.7.3 The plan should include resource lists, memoranda of understanding (or agreement), or standby contracts with suppliers to purchase items at fixed prices.

7.7.4 The plan should establish a process for anticipating demand, monitoring stock levels, and ordering supplies. Consider that the standard practice of maintaining minimum stocks and relying on just-in-time delivery could be affected by damage to the transportation infrastructure following a disaster.

7.7.5 The plan should identify a restocking strategy, such as first in, first out (FIFO) and identify minimum stock levels and reorder points. The supplies inventory should include items to support potential operational requirements, such as a need to shelter and feed the EOC team. Consider the potential for a rapid expansion of EOC personnel.