

Emergency Management in Your Pocket

Organizational Essentials

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Essentials & Key Elements

Essentials of DOT EM organization:

- Organization-wide policy setting for agency and to support state needs.
- Structure and resources to support EM operations.
- Deployment, coordination, and management of EM personnel and resources for agency and local/state/federal mission essential functions.
- Ability to address different levels of emergencies from local, state, regional, and national events.
- Training on EM plans and EM on an annual, or greater frequency, with participation of other state agencies and community.

Successful EM organizations have commonalities:

- Support by top DOT leadership with EM a core part of agency work.
- Intentionally built organizations and programs with institutionalized processes and behaviors.
- Strong interpersonal relationships with close coordination in planning and implementing.

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Provide an overall structure to support EM:

- Governance: relationship of the "lead" emergency response role with top agency leadership and how the roles and responsibilities of those parties are assigned.
- Programmatic Planning and Support: resources and activities needed to prepare for and manage event response
- Response: managing the event, all the elements surrounding different types and levels of events, and the organizational needs as the response moves between the event types and stages

DOTs vary in how they organize and operate EM:

- 2-30+ EM employees
- 74% have full-time EM program manager
- 70% have EM as part of Operations and Maintenance
- 42% have EM staff centralized at HQ
- 65% have centralized HQ-based EOC
- 44% have dedicated emergency response teams
- 70% have cross-trained employees for emergencies
- 50% of agencies have inter-agency or mutual aid agreements in place
- 42% rely upon informal ad-hoc personal contacts and relationships to access resources



Action Steps to Effective Practices

Be intentional about Emergency Management:

- Make EM a core part of the agency's work and establish a shared understanding of the role agency plays in EM.
- Establish and document response procedures and ensure that O&M staff are aware of procedures.
- Clarify and confirm response activities and expectations of partners.
- Recognize the importance of experience to reinforce EM training. Identify ways to exercise and practice EM response and support.
- Establish a forum or mechanism to discuss lessons learned and improvements. Spotlight good EM practices and identify opportunities to incorporate effective EM approaches in agency.

Be prepared to scale up emergency response:

- Establish backup positions and triggers to reevaluate the EM staffing during an event.
- Clarify who will do what in which circumstances and build in flexibility in agency support and to address unique situations.
- Ensure that emergency expedited processes are in place so that emergency contracts can be rapidly implemented using a ready list of pre-identified and pre-qualified contractors.
- Work with State EOC in advance to develop templates and transportation-specific "packages" for equipment and staff - MRPs- to request and/or supply support within and across state borders, consistent with EMAC.

Ensure institutionalization of EM program:

- Document contacts and relationships to maintain continuity over longer term. Share partner contacts with others in the agency. Bolster formal and informal relationships and nurture them year-round, making sure that they do not decay with attrition and turnover.
- Document agreements and include what is expected of each party and when to avoid conflicts during an event with other practices to remain resilient during leadership changes.
- Establish EM training requirements, including cross-training, and frequency of training to ensure continued EM workforce development.
- Establish agency EM performance measures.

How to Use the Model:

- Provides scenarios and considerations across major EM functions and facets of the DOT agency.
- View each element as a range of options that may be relevant to agency as part of self-assessment.
- Consider the full spectrum of scenarios across the potential size and scope of emergencies.

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Organizational Approach

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Model & Effective Practices

Governance:

Ensure that the agency recognizes the authority of the EM program manager, either formally or informally, and that senior management supports that authority.

Ensure that federal/state/local agencies and agency divisions/districts are aware that EM program manager represents DOT management.



Programmatic Planning and Support:

Ensure adequate support, expertise, and resources are available for EM program manager.

Clarify who will do what in which circumstances; and build in flexibility to address unique situations.



This handout is supplemental to *NCHRP Research Report 1088: State DOT Models for Organizing and Operating Emergency Response: A Guide* (NCHRP Project 20-128). The full report can be found by searching on the report title on the National Academies Press website (nap.nationalacademies.org).



Model & Effective Practices

Response:

Establish clear communications and chain of command. Know what resources may be needed by event type and geography.

Consider what specialized and/or cross-trained teams agency has in place and evaluate pro/cons of expanding flexibility.

