



# National Response Framework

*Third Edition*  
*June 2016*



Homeland  
Security



## Executive Summary

The National Response Framework is a guide to how the Nation responds to all types of disasters and emergencies. It is built on scalable, flexible, and adaptable concepts identified in the National Incident Management System to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation. This Framework describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from the serious but purely local to large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic natural disasters. The National Response Framework describes the principles, roles and responsibilities, and coordinating structures for delivering the core capabilities required to respond to an incident and further describes how response efforts integrate with those of the other mission areas. **This Framework is always in effect and describes the doctrine under which the Nation responds to incidents.** The structures, roles, and responsibilities described in this Framework can be partially or fully implemented in the context of a threat or hazard, in anticipation of a significant event, or in response to an incident. Selective implementation of National Response Framework structures and procedures allows for a scaled response, delivery of the specific resources and capabilities, and a level of coordination appropriate to each incident.

The Response mission area focuses on ensuring that the Nation is able to respond effectively to all types of incidents that range from those that are adequately handled with local assets to those of catastrophic proportion that require marshaling the capabilities of the entire Nation. The objectives of the Response mission area define the capabilities necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, meet basic human needs, stabilize the incident, restore basic services and community functionality, and establish a safe and secure environment to facilitate the integration of recovery activities.<sup>1</sup> The Response mission area includes 15 core capabilities: planning; public information and warning; operational coordination; critical transportation; environmental response/health and safety; fatality management services; fire management and suppression; infrastructure systems; logistics and supply chain management; mass care services; mass search and rescue operations; on-scene security, protection, and law enforcement; operational communications; public health, healthcare, and emergency medical services; and situational assessment.

The priorities of the Response mission area are to save lives, protect property and the environment, stabilize the incident, and provide for basic human needs. The following principles establish fundamental doctrine for the Response mission area: engaged partnership; tiered response; scalable, flexible, and adaptable operational capabilities; unity of effort through unified command; and readiness to act.

Scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures are essential in aligning the key roles and responsibilities to deliver the Response mission area's core capabilities. The flexibility of such structures helps ensure that communities across the country can organize response efforts to address a variety of risks based on their unique needs, capabilities, demographics, governing structures, and non-traditional partners. This Framework is not based on a one-size-fits-all organizational construct, but instead acknowledges the concept of tiered response, which emphasizes that response to incidents should be handled at the lowest jurisdictional level capable of handling the mission.

---

<sup>1</sup> As with all activities in support of the National Preparedness Goal, activities taken under the response mission must be consistent with all pertinent statutes and policies, particularly those involving privacy and civil and human rights, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In implementing the National Response Framework to build national preparedness, partners are encouraged to develop a shared understanding of broad-level strategic implications as they make critical decisions in building future capacity and capability. The whole community should be engaged in examining and implementing the strategy and doctrine contained in this Framework, considering both current and future requirements in the process.

# Table of Contents

- Introduction ..... 1**
  - Framework Purpose and Organization .....1**
  - Evolution of the Framework .....3**
  - Relationship to NIMS .....3**
  - Intended Audience .....4**
  
- Scope ..... 4**
  - Guiding Principles .....5**
  - Risk Basis.....7**
  
- Roles and Responsibilities..... 8**
  - Individuals, Families, and Households .....8**
  - Communities.....9**
  - Nongovernmental Organizations.....9**
  - Private Sector Entities .....10**
  - Local Governments .....11**
  - State, Tribal, Territorial, and Insular Area Governments .....12**
  - Federal Government.....15**
  
- Core Capabilities ..... 20**
  - Context of the Response Mission Area.....20**
  - Response Actions to Deliver Core Capabilities .....28**
  
- Coordinating Structures and Integration ..... 32**
  - Local Coordinating Structures .....32**
  - State and Territorial Coordinating Structures .....32**
  - Tribal Coordinating Structures.....32**
  - Private Sector Coordinating Structures .....33**
  - Federal Coordinating Structures.....33**
  - Operational Coordination .....39**
  - Integration .....45**

**Relationship to Other Mission Areas..... 47**

**Operational Planning ..... 47**

**Response Operational Planning .....48**

**Planning Assumptions .....51**

**Framework Application .....51**

**Supporting Resources..... 51**

**Conclusion..... 52**

## Introduction

The National Preparedness System outlines an organized process for the whole community to move forward with their preparedness activities and achieve the National Preparedness Goal. The National Preparedness System integrates efforts across the five preparedness mission areas—Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery—in order to achieve the goal of a secure and resilient Nation. The National Response Framework (NRF), part of the National Preparedness System, sets the strategy and doctrine for how the whole community builds, sustains, and delivers the Response core capabilities identified in the National Preparedness Goal in an integrated manner with the other mission areas. This third edition of the NRF reflects the insights and lessons learned from real-world incidents and the implementation of the National Preparedness System.

**Prevention:** The capabilities necessary to avoid, prevent, or stop a threatened or actual act of terrorism. Within the context of national preparedness, the term “prevention” refers to preventing imminent threats.

**Protection:** The capabilities necessary to secure the homeland against acts of terrorism and manmade or natural disasters.

**Mitigation:** The capabilities necessary to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters.

**Response:** The capabilities necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred.

**Recovery:** The capabilities necessary to assist communities affected by an incident to recover effectively.

### Framework Purpose and Organization

The NRF is a guide to how the Nation responds to all types of disasters and emergencies. It is built on scalable, flexible, and adaptable concepts identified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS)<sup>2</sup> to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation. The NRF describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from the serious but purely local to large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic<sup>3</sup> natural disasters.

This document supersedes the NRF that was issued in May 2013. It becomes effective 60 days after publication.

The term “response,” as used in the NRF, includes actions to save lives, protect property and the environment, stabilize communities, and meet basic human needs following an incident. Response also includes the execution of emergency plans and actions to support short-term recovery. The NRF describes doctrine for managing any type of disaster or emergency regardless of scale, scope, and complexity. This Framework explains common response disciplines and processes that have been

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>

<sup>3</sup> A catastrophic incident is defined as any natural or manmade incident, including terrorism, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, or government functions.

developed at all levels of government (local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area,<sup>4</sup> and Federal) and have matured over time.

To support the Goal, the objectives of the NRF are to:

- Describe scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures, as well as key roles and responsibilities for integrating capabilities across the whole community,<sup>5</sup> to support the efforts of local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal governments in responding to actual and potential incidents.
- Describe, across the whole community, the steps needed to prepare for delivering the response core capabilities.
- Foster integration and coordination of activities within the Response mission area.
- Outline how the Response mission area relates to the other mission areas, as well as the relationship between the Response core capabilities and the core capabilities in other mission areas.
- Provide guidance through doctrine and establish the foundation for the development of the Response Federal Interagency Operational Plan (FIOP).
- Incorporate continuity operations and planning to facilitate the performance of response core capabilities during all hazards emergencies or other situations that may disrupt normal operations.

The NRF is composed of a base document, Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes, and Support Annexes. The annexes provide detailed information to assist with the implementation of the NRF.

- **ESF Annexes** describe the Federal coordinating structures that group resources and capabilities into functional areas that are most frequently needed in a national response.
- **Support Annexes** describe the essential supporting processes and considerations that are most common to the majority of incidents.

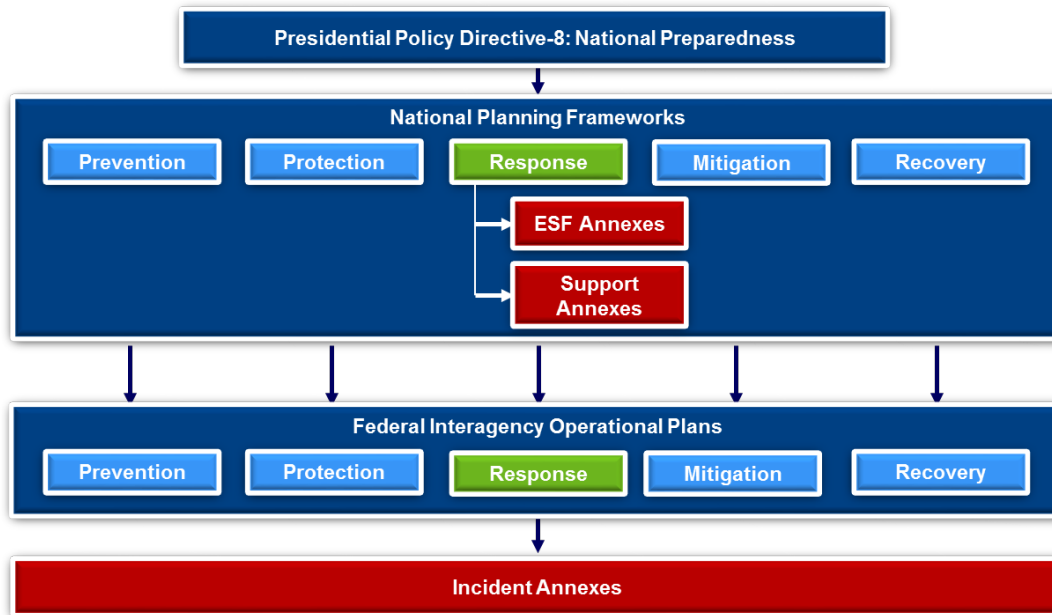
Note that the incident annexes, which address response to specific risks and hazards, can now be found as annexes to the Response FIOP rather than as supplements to the NRF. This change is consistent with guidance in the National Preparedness System.

---

<sup>4</sup> Per the Stafford Act, insular areas include Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Other statutes or departments and agencies may define the term insular area differently.

<sup>5</sup> Whole community includes individuals and communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and all levels of government (local, regional/metropolitan, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal). Whole community is defined in the National Preparedness Goal as “a focus on enabling the participation in national preparedness activities of a wider range of players from the private and nonprofit sectors, including nongovernmental organizations and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of all levels of governmental in order to foster better coordination and working relationships.” The National Preparedness Goal may be found online at <http://www.fema.gov>.





**Figure 1: NRF and FIOP Structure**

### *Evolution of the Framework*

The NRF builds on over 20 years of Federal response guidance beginning with the Federal Response Plan published in 1992, which focused largely on Federal roles and responsibilities. The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the emphasis on the development and implementation of common incident management and response principles led to the development of the National Response Plan (NRP) in 2004. The NRP broke new ground by integrating all levels of government, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations (NGO) into a common incident management framework. In 2008, the NRP was superseded by the first NRF, which streamlined the guidance and integrated lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and other incidents.

This NRF reiterates the principles and concepts of the 2013 version of the NRF and implements the new requirements and terminology of the National Preparedness System. By fostering a holistic approach to response, this NRF emphasizes the need for the involvement of the whole community. Along with the National Planning Frameworks for other mission areas, this document now describes the all-important integration and inter-relationships among the mission areas of Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery.

### *Relationship to NIMS*

The response protocols and structures described in the NRF align with NIMS. NIMS provides the incident management basis for the NRF and defines standard command and management structures. Standardizing national response doctrine on NIMS provides a consistent, nationwide template to enable the whole community to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the effects of incidents regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity.

All of the components of the NIMS—including preparedness, communications and information management, resource management, and command and management—support response. The NIMS concepts of multiagency coordination and unified command are described in the command and management component of NIMS. These two concepts are essential to effective response operations

because they address the importance of: (1) developing a single set of objectives, (2) using a collective, strategic approach, (3) improving information flow and coordination, (4) creating a common understanding of joint priorities and limitations, (5) ensuring that no agency's legal authorities are compromised or neglected, and (6) optimizing the combined efforts of all participants under a single plan.

### *Intended Audience*

Although the NRF is intended to provide guidance for the whole community, it focuses especially on the needs of those who are involved in delivering and applying the response core capabilities defined in the National Preparedness Goal. This includes emergency management practitioners, first responders, community leaders, and government officials who must collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and organizations and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their resilience.

**The NRF is intended to be used by the whole community.** The whole community includes individuals, families, households, communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and local, state, tribal, territorial, and Federal governments. This all-inclusive approach focuses efforts and enables a full range of stakeholders to participate in national preparedness activities and to be full partners in incident response. Government resources alone cannot meet all the needs of those affected by major disasters. All elements of the community must be activated, engaged, and integrated to respond to a major or catastrophic incident.

Engaging the whole community, particularly with regards to developing individual and community preparedness, is essential to the Nation's success in achieving resilience and national preparedness. By providing equal access to acquire and use the necessary knowledge and skills, this Framework is intended to enable the whole community to contribute to and benefit from national preparedness. This includes children<sup>6</sup>; older adults; individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs<sup>7</sup>; those from religious, racial, and ethnically diverse backgrounds; people with limited English proficiency; and owners of animals, including household pets and service and assistance animals. Their contributions must be integrated into the Nation's efforts, and their needs must be incorporated as the whole community plans and executes the core capabilities.<sup>8</sup>

### **Scope**

---

The NRF describes structures for implementing nationwide response policy and operational coordination for all types of domestic incidents.<sup>9</sup> This section describes the scope of the Response

---

<sup>6</sup> Children require a unique set of considerations across the core capabilities contained within this document. Their needs must be taken into consideration as part of any integrated planning effort.

<sup>7</sup> Access and functional needs refers to persons who may have additional needs before, during and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: maintaining health, independence, communication, transportation, support, services, self-determination, and medical care. Individuals in need of additional response assistance may include those who have disabilities; live in institutionalized settings; are older adults; are children; are from diverse cultures; have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking; or are transportation disadvantaged.

<sup>8</sup> For further information, see the Core Capabilities section.

<sup>9</sup> A domestic incident may have international and diplomatic impacts and implications that call for coordination and consultations with foreign governments and international organizations. The NRF also applies to the domestic response to incidents of foreign origin that impact the United States. See the International Coordination Support Annex for more information.

mission area, the guiding principles of response doctrine and their application, and how risk informs response planning.

The Response mission area focuses on ensuring that the Nation is able to respond effectively to all types of incidents that range from those that are adequately handled with local assets to those of catastrophic proportion that require marshaling the capabilities of the entire Nation. The objectives of the Response mission area define the capabilities necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, meet basic human needs, stabilize the incident, restore basic services and community functionality, and establish a safe and secure environment to facilitate the integration of recovery activities.<sup>10</sup>

The NRF describes the principles, roles and responsibilities, and coordinating structures for delivering the core capabilities required to respond to any incident and further describes how response efforts integrate with those of the other mission areas. **The NRF is always in effect, and elements can be implemented at any time.** The structures, roles, and responsibilities described in the NRF can be partially or fully implemented in the context of a threat or hazard, in anticipation of a significant event, or in response to an incident. Selective implementation of NRF structures and procedures allows for a scaled response, delivery of the specific resources and capabilities, and a level of coordination appropriate to each incident.

In this Framework, the term ‘incident’ includes actual or potential emergencies and disasters resulting from all types of threats and hazards, ranging from accidents and natural disasters to cyber intrusions and terrorist attacks. The NRF’s structures and procedures address how Federal departments and agencies coordinate support for local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments.

Nothing in the NRF is intended to alter or impede the ability of any local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, or Federal government department or agency to carry out its authorities or meet its responsibilities under applicable laws, executive orders, and directives.

## Guiding Principles

The priorities of response are to save lives, protect property and the environment, stabilize the incident, and provide for basic human needs. The following principles establish fundamental doctrine for the Response mission area: (1) engaged partnership, (2) tiered response, (3) scalable, flexible, and adaptable operational capabilities, (4) unity of effort through unified command, and (5) readiness to act. These principles are rooted in the Federal system and the Constitution’s division of responsibilities between state and Federal governments. These principles reflect the history of emergency management and the distilled wisdom of responders and leaders across the whole community.

### Engaged Partnership

Effective partnership relies on engaging all elements of the whole community, as well as international partners in some cases. This also includes survivors who may require assistance and who may also be resources to support community response and recovery.

---

<sup>10</sup> As with all activities in support of the National Preparedness Goal, activities taken under the response mission must be consistent with all pertinent statutes and policies, particularly those involving privacy and civil and human rights, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Those who lead emergency response efforts must communicate and support engagement with the whole community by developing shared goals and aligning capabilities to reduce the risk of any jurisdiction being overwhelmed in times of crisis. Layered, mutually supporting capabilities of individuals, communities, the private sector, NGOs, and governments at all levels allow for coordinated planning in times of calm and effective response in times of crisis. Engaged partnership and coalition building includes ongoing clear, consistent, accessible, effective,<sup>11</sup> and culturally and linguistically appropriate communication and shared situational awareness about an incident to ensure an appropriate response.

### **Tiered Response**

Most incidents begin and end locally and are managed at the local or tribal level. These incidents may require a unified response from local agencies, the private sector, and NGOs. Some may require additional support from neighboring jurisdictions or state governments. A smaller number of incidents require Federal support or are led by the Federal Government.<sup>12</sup> National response protocols are structured to provide tiered levels of support when additional resources or capabilities are needed.

### **Scalable, Flexible, and Adaptable Operational Capabilities**

As incidents change in size, scope, and complexity, response efforts must adapt to meet evolving requirements. The number, type, and sources of resources must be able to expand rapidly to meet the changing needs associated with a given incident and its cascading effects. As needs grow and change, response processes must remain nimble and adaptable. The structures and processes described in the NRF must be able to surge resources from the whole community. As incidents stabilize, response efforts must be flexible to facilitate the integration of recovery activities.

### **Unity of Effort through Unified Command**

Effective, unified command is indispensable to response activities and requires a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all participating organizations.<sup>13</sup> The Incident Command System (ICS), a component of NIMS, is an important element in ensuring interoperability across multi-jurisdictional or multiagency incident management activities. Unified command, a central tenet of ICS, enables organizations with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for an incident to support each other through the use of mutually developed incident objectives. Each participating agency maintains its own authority, responsibility, and accountability.

---

<sup>11</sup> Information, warnings, and communications associated with emergency management must ensure effective communication, such as through the use of appropriate auxiliary aids and services (e.g., interpreters, captioning, alternate format documents) for individuals with disabilities, and provide meaningful access to limited English proficient individuals.

<sup>12</sup> Certain incidents such as a pandemic or cyber event may not be limited to a specific geographic area and may be managed at the local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, or Federal level depending on the nature of the incident.

<sup>13</sup> The ICS's "unified command" concept is distinct from the military use of this term. Concepts of "command" and "unity of command" have distinct legal and cultural meanings for military forces and military operations. Military forces always remain under the control of the military chain of command and are subject to redirection or recall at any time. Military forces do not operate under the command of the incident commander or under the unified command structure, but they do coordinate with response partners and work toward a unity of effort while maintaining their internal chain of command.

## Readiness to Act

Effective response requires a readiness to act that is balanced with an understanding of the risks and hazards responders face. From individuals and communities to the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and all levels of government (local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal), national response depends on the ability to act decisively. A forward-leaning posture is imperative for incidents that may expand rapidly in size, scope, or complexity, as well as incidents that occur without warning. Decisive action is often required to save lives and protect property and the environment. Although some risk to responders may be unavoidable, all response personnel are responsible for anticipating and managing risk through proper planning, organizing, equipping, training, and exercising.

## Risk Basis

The NRF leverages the results of the Strategic National Risk Assessment (SNRA), contained in the second edition of the National Preparedness Goal, to build and deliver the response core capabilities. The results indicate that a wide range of threats and hazards continue to pose a significant risk to the Nation, affirming the need for an all-hazards, capability-based approach to preparedness planning. The results contained in the Goal include:

- Natural hazards, including hurricanes, earthquakes, tornados, drought, wildfires, winter storms, and floods, present a significant and varied risk across the country. Climate change has the potential to cause the consequence of weather-related hazards to become more severe.
- A virulent strain of pandemic influenza could kill hundreds of thousands of Americans, affect millions more, and result in economic loss. Additional human and animal infectious diseases, including those undiscovered, may present significant risks.
- Technological and accidental hazards, such as transportation system failures, dam failures, or chemical spills or releases, have the potential to cause extensive fatalities and severe economic impacts. In addition, these hazards may increase due to aging infrastructure.
- Terrorist organizations or affiliates may seek to acquire, build, and use weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Conventional terrorist attacks, including those by “lone actors” employing physical threats such as explosives and armed attacks, present a continued risk to the Nation.
- Cybersecurity threats exploit the increased complexity and connectivity of critical infrastructure systems, placing the Nation’s security, economy, and public safety and health at risk. Malicious cyber activity can have catastrophic consequences, which in turn, can lead to other hazards, such as power grid failures or financial system failures. These cascading hazards increase the potential impact of cyber incidents.
- Some incidents, such as explosives attacks or earthquakes, generally cause more localized impacts, while other incidents, such as human pandemics, may cause impacts that are dispersed throughout the Nation, thus creating different types of impacts for planners to consider.

No single threat or hazard exists in isolation. As an example, a hurricane can lead to flooding, dam failures, and hazardous materials spills. The Framework, therefore, focuses on core capabilities that can be applied to deal with cascading effects. Since many incidents occur with little or no warning, these capabilities must be able to be delivered in a no-notice environment.

Effective continuity planning helps to ensure the uninterrupted ability to engage partners; respond appropriately with scaled, flexible, and adaptable operational capabilities; specify succession to

office and delegations of authority to protect the unity of effort and command; and to account for the availability of responders regardless of the threat or hazard.

In order to establish the basis for these capabilities, planning factors drawn from a number of different scenarios are used to develop the Response FIOP, which supplements the NRF. Refer to the Operational Planning section for additional details on planning assumptions.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

---

Effective response depends on integration of the whole community and all partners executing their roles and responsibilities. This section describes those roles and responsibilities and sharpens the focus on identifying who is involved with the Response mission area. It also addresses what the various partners must do to deliver the response core capabilities and to integrate successfully with the Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, and Recovery mission areas.

An effective, unified national response requires layered, mutually supporting capabilities. Individuals and communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and all levels of government (local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal) should each understand their respective roles and responsibilities and how to complement each other in achieving shared goals. All elements of the whole community play prominent roles in developing the core capabilities needed to respond to incidents. This includes developing plans, conducting assessments and exercises, providing and directing resources and capabilities, and gathering lessons learned. These activities require that all partners understand how they fit within and are supported by the structures described in the NRF.

Emergency management staff in all jurisdictions have a fundamental responsibility to consider the needs of all members of the whole community. The potential contributions of all these individuals toward delivering core capabilities during incident response (e.g., through associations and alliances that serve the people identified above) should be incorporated into planning efforts.

Emergency management staff must also consider those who own or have responsibility for animals, both as members of the community who may be affected by incidents and as a potential means of supporting response efforts. This includes those with household pets, service and assistance animals, working dogs, and agricultural animals/livestock, as well as those who have responsibility for wildlife, exotic animals, zoo animals, research animals, and animals housed in shelters, rescue organizations, breeding facilities, and sanctuaries.

### ***Individuals, Families, and Households***

Although not formally part of emergency management operations, individuals, families, and households play an important role in emergency preparedness and response. By reducing hazards in and around their homes by efforts such as raising utilities above flood level or securing unanchored objects against the threat of high winds, individuals reduce potential emergency response requirements. Individuals, families, and households should also prepare emergency supply kits and emergency plans, so they can take care of themselves and their neighbors until assistance arrives. Information on emergency preparedness can be found at many community, state, and Federal emergency management Web sites, such as <http://www.ready.gov>.

Individuals can also contribute to the preparedness and resilience of their households and communities by volunteering with emergency organizations (e.g., the local chapter of the American Red Cross, Medical Reserve Corps, or Community Emergency Response Teams [CERT]) and completing emergency response training courses. Individuals, families, and households should make

preparations with family members who have access and functional needs or medical needs. Their plans should also include provisions for their animals, including household pets or service and assistance animals. During an actual disaster, emergency, or threat, individuals, households, and families should monitor emergency communications and follow guidance and instructions provided by local authorities.

## Communities

Communities are groups that share goals, values, and institutions. They are not always bound by geographic boundaries or political divisions. Instead, they may be faith-based organizations, neighborhood partnerships, advocacy groups, academia, social and community groups, and associations. Communities bring people together in different ways for different reasons, but each provides opportunities for sharing information and promoting collective action. Engaging these groups in preparedness efforts, particularly at the local and state levels, is important to identifying their needs and taking advantage of their potential contributions.

## Nongovernmental Organizations

NGOs play vital roles at the local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and national levels in delivering important services, including those associated with the response core capabilities. NGOs include voluntary, racial and ethnic, faith-based, veteran-based, and nonprofit organizations that provide sheltering, emergency food supplies, and other essential support services. NGOs are inherently independent and committed to specific interests and values. These interests and values drive the groups' operational priorities and shape the resources they provide. NGOs bolster government efforts at all levels and often provide specialized services to the whole community. NGOs are key partners in preparedness activities and response operations.

Examples of NGO contributions include:

- Training, management, and coordination of volunteers and donated goods.
- Identifying and communicating physically accessible shelter locations and needed supplies to support people displaced by an incident.
- Providing emergency commodities and services, such as water, food, shelter, assistance with family reunification, clothing, and supplies for post-emergency cleanup.
- Supporting the evacuation, rescue, care, and sheltering of animals displaced by the incident.
- Providing search and rescue, transportation, and logistics services and support.
- Identifying those whose needs have not been met and helping to provide assistance.
- Providing health, medical, mental health, and behavioral health resources.
- Assisting, coordinating, and providing assistance to individuals with access and functional needs.

At the same time when NGOs support response core capabilities, they may also require government assistance. When planning for local community emergency management resources, government organizations should consider the potential need to better enable NGOs to perform their essential response functions.

Some NGOs are officially designated as support elements to national response capabilities:

- **The American Red Cross.** The American Red Cross is chartered by Congress to provide relief to survivors of disasters and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. The

Red Cross has a legal status of “a federal instrumentality” and maintains a special relationship with the Federal Government. In this capacity, the American Red Cross supports several ESFs and the delivery of multiple core capabilities.

- **National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (National VOAD).**<sup>14</sup> National VOAD is the forum where organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle—preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation—to help disaster survivors and their communities. National VOAD is a consortium of approximately 50 national organizations and 55 territorial and state equivalents.
- **Volunteers and Donations.** Incident response operations frequently exceed the resources of government organizations. Volunteers and donors support response efforts in many ways, and governments at all levels must plan ahead to incorporate volunteers and donated resources into response activities. The goal of volunteer and donations management is to support jurisdictions affected by disasters through close collaboration with the voluntary organizations and agencies. The objective is to manage the influx of volunteers and donations to voluntary agencies and all levels of government before, during, and after an incident. Additional information may be found in the Volunteers and Donations Management Support Annex.
- **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC).** Within the NCMEC, the National Emergency Child Locator Center (NECLC) facilitates the expeditious identification and reunification of children with their families.

### *Private Sector Entities*

Private sector organizations contribute to response efforts through partnerships with each level of government. They play key roles before, during, and after incidents. Private sector entities include large, medium, and small businesses; commerce, private cultural and educational institutions; and industry; as well as public/private partnerships that have been established specifically for emergency management purposes. During an incident, key private sector partners should have a direct link to emergency managers and, in some cases, be involved in the decision making process. Strong integration into response efforts can offer many benefits to both the public and private sectors.

Private sector organizations may be affected by direct or indirect consequences of an incident. Such organizations include entities that are significant to local, regional, and national economic recovery from an incident. Examples include major employers and suppliers of key commodities or services. As key elements of the national economy, it is important for private sector organizations of all types and sizes to take every precaution necessary to boost resilience, the better to stay in business or resume normal operations quickly.

Unique private sector organizations including critical infrastructure and regulated entities may require additional efforts to promote resilience. Critical infrastructure—such as privately owned transportation and transit, telecommunications, utilities, financial institutions, hospitals, and other health regulated facilities—should have effective business continuity plans.

Owners/operators of certain regulated facilities or hazardous operations may be legally responsible for preparing for and preventing incidents and responding when an incident occurs. For example, Federal regulations require owners/operators of nuclear power plants to maintain emergency plans and to perform assessments, notifications, and training for incident response.

---

<sup>14</sup> Additional information is available at <http://www.nvoad.org>.



Private sector entities may serve as partners in state and local emergency preparedness and response organizations and activities and with Federal sector-specific agencies. Private sector entities often participate in state and local preparedness activities by providing resources (donated or compensated) during an incident—including specialized teams, essential services, equipment, and advanced technologies—through local public-private emergency plans or mutual aid and assistance agreements or in response to requests from government and nongovernmental-volunteer initiatives.

A fundamental responsibility of private sector organizations is to provide for the welfare of their employees in the workplace. In addition, some businesses play an essential role in protecting critical infrastructure systems and implementing plans for the rapid reestablishment of normal commercial activities and critical infrastructure operations following a disruption. In many cases, private sector organizations have immediate access to commodities and services that can support incident response, making them key potential contributors of resources necessary to deliver the core capabilities. How the private sector participates in response activities varies based on the type of organization and the nature of the incident.

Examples of key private sector activities include:

- Addressing the response needs of employees, infrastructure, and facilities.
- Protecting information and maintaining the continuity of business operations.
- Planning for, responding to, and recovering from incidents that impact their own infrastructure and facilities.
- Collaborating with emergency management personnel to determine what assistance may be required and how they can provide needed support.
- Contributing to communication and information-sharing efforts during incidents.
- Planning, training, and exercising their response capabilities.
- Providing assistance specified under mutual aid and assistance agreements.
- Contributing resources, personnel, and expertise; helping to shape objectives; and receiving information about the status of the community.

## Local Governments

The responsibility for responding to natural and manmade incidents that have recognizable geographic boundaries generally begins at the local level with individuals and public officials in the county, parish, city, or town affected by an incident. The following paragraphs describe the responsibilities of specific local officials who have emergency management responsibilities.

### Chief Elected or Appointed Official

Jurisdictional chief executives are responsible for the public safety and welfare of the people of their jurisdiction. These officials provide strategic guidance and resources across all five mission areas. Chief elected or appointed officials must have a clear understanding of their emergency management roles and responsibilities and how to apply the response core capabilities as they may need to make decisions regarding resources and operations during an incident. Lives may depend on their decisions. Elected and appointed officials also routinely shape or modify laws, policies, and budgets to aid preparedness efforts and improve emergency management and response capabilities. The local chief executive's response duties may include:

- Obtaining assistance from other governmental agencies.

- Providing direction for response activities.
- Ensuring appropriate information is provided to the public.

## **Emergency Manager**

The jurisdiction's emergency manager oversees the day-to-day emergency management programs and activities. The emergency manager works with chief elected and appointed officials to establish unified objectives regarding the jurisdiction's emergency plans and activities. This role entails coordinating and integrating all elements of the community. The emergency manager coordinates the local emergency management program. This includes assessing the capacity and readiness to deliver the capabilities most likely required during an incident and identifying and correcting any shortfalls. The local emergency manager's duties often include:

- Advising elected and appointed officials during a response.
- Conducting response operations in accordance with the NIMS.
- Coordinating the functions of local agencies.
- Coordinating the development of plans and working cooperatively with other local agencies, community organizations, private sector entities, and NGOs.
- Developing and maintaining mutual aid and assistance agreements.
- Coordinating resource requests during an incident through the management of an emergency operations center.
- Coordinating damage assessments during an incident.
- Advising and informing local officials and the public about emergency management activities during an incident.
- Developing and executing accessible public awareness and education programs.
- Conducting exercises to test plans and systems and obtain lessons learned.
- Coordinating integration of the rights of individuals with disabilities, individuals from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, and others with access and functional needs into emergency planning and response.
- Helping to ensure the continuation of essential services and functions through the development and implementation of continuity of operations plans.

## **Other Local Departments and Agencies**

Department and agency heads collaborate with the emergency manager during the development of local emergency plans and provide key response resources. Participation in the planning process helps to ensure that specific capabilities are integrated into a workable plan to safeguard the community. These department and agency heads and their staffs develop, plan, and train on internal policies and procedures to meet response needs safely. They also participate in interagency training and exercises to develop and maintain necessary capabilities.

## ***State, Tribal, Territorial, and Insular Area Governments***

State, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments are responsible for the health and welfare of their residents, communities, lands, and cultural heritage.

## States

State governments<sup>15</sup> supplement local efforts before, during, and after incidents by applying in-state resources first. If a state anticipates that its resources may be exceeded, the governor<sup>16</sup> may request assistance from other states or the Federal Government through a Stafford Act Declaration.

The following paragraphs describe some of the relevant roles and responsibilities of key officials.

### *Governor*

The public safety and welfare of a state's residents are the fundamental responsibilities of every governor. The governor coordinates state resources and provides the strategic guidance for response to all types of incidents. This includes supporting local governments as needed and coordinating assistance with other states and the Federal Government. A governor also:

- In accordance with state law, may make, amend, or suspend certain orders or regulations associated with response.
- Communicates to the public, in an accessible manner (e.g., effective communications to address all members of the whole community), and helps people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of incident.
- Coordinates with tribal governments within the state.
- Commands the state military forces (National Guard personnel not in Federal service and state militias).
- Coordinates assistance from other states through interstate mutual aid and assistance agreements, such as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).<sup>17</sup>

### *State Homeland Security Advisor*

Many states have designated homeland security advisors who serve as counsel to the governor on homeland security issues and may serve as a liaison between the governor's office, the state homeland security structure, and other organizations both inside and outside of the state. The advisor often chairs a committee composed of representatives of relevant state agencies, including public safety, the National Guard, emergency management, public health, environment, agriculture, and others charged with developing prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery strategies.

### *State Emergency Management Agency Director*

All states have laws mandating the establishment of a state emergency management agency, as well as the emergency plans coordinated by that agency. The director of the state emergency management agency is responsible for ensuring that the state is prepared to deal with large-scale emergencies and

---

<sup>15</sup> States are sovereign entities, and the governor has responsibility for public safety and welfare. Although U.S. territories, possessions, freely associated states, and tribal governments also have sovereign rights, there are unique factors involved in working with these entities. Federal assistance is available to states and to the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Federal disaster preparedness, response, and recovery assistance is available to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands pursuant to Compacts of Free Association. The extent to which Federal response or assistance is provided to tribes, territories, and insular areas under other Federal laws is defined in those laws and supporting regulations.

<sup>16</sup> "Governor" is used throughout this document to refer to the chief executive of states, territories, and insular areas.

<sup>17</sup> A reference paper on EMAC is available at <http://www.emacweb.org>.

coordinating the statewide response to any such incident. This includes supporting local and tribal governments as needed, coordinating assistance with other states and the Federal Government, and, in some cases, with NGOs and private sector organizations. The state emergency management agency may dispatch personnel to assist in the response and recovery effort.

### ***National Guard***

The National Guard is an important state and Federal resource available for planning, preparing, and responding to natural or manmade incidents. National Guard members have expertise in critical areas, such as emergency medical response; communications; logistics; search and rescue; civil engineering; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear response and planning; and decontamination.<sup>18</sup>

The governor may activate elements of the National Guard to support state domestic civil support functions and activities. The state adjutant general may assign members of the Guard to assist with state, regional, and Federal civil support plans.

### ***Other State Departments and Agencies***

State department and agency heads and their staffs develop, plan, and train on internal policies and procedures to meet response and recovery needs. They also participate in interagency training and exercises to develop and maintain the necessary capabilities. They are vital to the state's overall emergency management program, as they bring expertise spanning various response functions and serve as core members of the state emergency operations center (EOC) and incident command posts (ICP). Many of them have direct experience in providing accessible and vital services to the whole community during response operations. State departments and agencies typically work in close coordination with their Federal counterpart agencies during joint state and Federal responses, and under some Federal laws, they may request assistance from these Federal partners.

### **Tribes**

The United States has a trust relationship with federally-recognized Indian tribes and recognizes their right to self-government. Under the Stafford Act, federally-recognized Indian tribes may directly request their own emergency and major declaration, or they may request assistance under a state request. In addition, federally-recognized Indian tribes can request Federal assistance for incidents that impact the tribe, but do not result in a Stafford Act declaration.

In accordance with the Stafford Act, the Chief Executive<sup>19</sup> of an affected Indian tribal government may submit a request for a declaration by the President. Tribal governments are responsible for coordinating resources to address actual or potential incidents.

Tribes are encouraged to build relationships with local jurisdictions and their states as they may have resources most readily available. The NRF's Tribal Coordination Support Annex outlines processes and mechanisms that tribal governments may use to request Federal assistance during an incident.

---

<sup>18</sup> The President may call National Guard forces into Federal service for domestic duties, including pursuant to under section 12406 of Title 10 (providing such authority e.g., in cases of invasion by a foreign nation, rebellion against the authority of the United States, or where the President is unable to execute the laws of the United States with regular forces) under 10 U.S. Code § 12406). When called into Federal service, National Guardsmen are employed under Title 10 of the U.S. Code and are no longer under the command of the governor. Instead, they operate under the Secretary of Defense.

<sup>19</sup> The Stafford Act uses the term "Chief Executive" to refer to the person who is the Chief, Chairman, Governor, President, or similar executive official of an Indian tribal government.

### ***Chief Executive***

The Chief Executive is responsible for the public safety and welfare of his or her respective tribe. The Chief Executive:

- Coordinates resources needed to respond to incidents of all types.
- In accordance with the law, may make, amend, or suspend certain orders or regulations associated with the response.
- Communicates with the public in an accessible manner and helps people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of incident.
- Negotiates mutual aid and assistance agreements with other local jurisdictions, states, tribes, territories, and insular area governments.
- Can request Federal assistance.

### **Territories/Insular Area Governments**

Territorial and insular area governments are responsible for coordinating resources to address actual or potential incidents. Due to their remote locations, territories and insular area governments often face unique challenges in receiving assistance from outside the jurisdiction quickly and often request assistance from neighboring islands, other nearby countries, states, private sector or NGO resources, or the Federal Government.

#### ***Territorial/Insular Area Leader***

The territorial/insular area leader is responsible for the public safety and welfare of the people of his/her jurisdiction. As authorized by the territorial or insular area government, the leader:

- Coordinates resources needed to respond to incidents of all types.
- In accordance with the law, may make, amend, or suspend certain orders or regulations associated with the response.
- Communicates with the public in an accessible manner and helps people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of incident.
- Commands the territory's military forces.
- Negotiates mutual aid and assistance agreements with other local jurisdictions, states, tribes, territories, and insular area governments.
- Can request Federal assistance.

### ***Federal Government***

The Federal Government maintains a wide range of capabilities and resources that may be required to deal with domestic incidents in order to save lives and protect property and the environment while ensuring the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. To be successful, any approach to the delivery of Response capabilities will require an all-of-nation approach. All Federal departments and agencies must cooperate with one another, and with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, community members, and the private sector to the maximum extent possible.

The Federal Government becomes involved with a response when Federal interests are involved; when state, local, tribal, or territorial resources are overwhelmed and Federal assistance is requested;

or as authorized or required by statute, regulation, or policy. Accordingly, in some instances, the Federal Government may play a supporting role to state, local, tribal, or territorial authorities by providing Federal assistance to the affected parties. For example, the Federal Government provides assistance to state, local, tribal, and territorial authorities when the President declares a major disaster or emergency under the Stafford Act. In other instances, the Federal Government may play a leading role in the response where the Federal Government has primary jurisdiction or when incidents occur on Federal property (e.g., National Parks, military bases).

Regardless of the type of incident, the President leads the Federal Government response effort to ensure that the necessary resources are applied quickly and efficiently to large-scale and catastrophic incidents. Different Federal departments or agencies lead coordination of the Federal Government's response depending on the type and magnitude of the incident and are also supported by other agencies that bring their relevant capabilities to bear in responding to the incident. For example, FEMA leads and coordinates Federal response and assistance when the President declares a major disaster or emergency under the Stafford Act. Similarly, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) leads all Federal public health and medical response to public health emergencies and incidents covered by the NRF.

### ***Secretary of Homeland Security***

In conjunction with these efforts, the statutory mission of the Department of Homeland Security is to act as a focal point regarding both natural and manmade crises and emergency planning. Pursuant to the Homeland Security Act and Presidential directive, the Secretary of Homeland Security is the principal federal official for domestic incident management. The Secretary of Homeland Security coordinates preparedness activities within the United States to respond to and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. The Secretary coordinates with Federal entities to provide for Federal unity of efforts for domestic incident management.

As part of these responsibilities, the Secretary provides the Executive Branch with an overall architecture for domestic incident management and coordinates the Federal response, as required. The Secretary of Homeland Security may monitor activities and activate specific response mechanisms to support other Federal departments and agencies without assuming the overall coordination of the Federal response during incidents that do not require the Secretary to coordinate the response or do not result in a Stafford Act declaration. Other Federal departments and agencies carry out their response authorities and responsibilities within this overarching construct of DHS coordination.

Unity of effort differs from unity of command. Various Federal departments and agencies may have statutory responsibilities and lead roles based upon the unique circumstances of the incident. Unity of effort provides coordination through cooperation and common interests and does not interfere with Federal departments' and agencies' supervisory, command, or statutory authorities. The Secretary ensures that overall Federal actions are unified, complete, and synchronized to prevent unfilled gaps or seams in the Federal Government's overarching effort. This coordinated approach ensures that the Federal actions undertaken by DHS and other departments and agencies are harmonized and mutually supportive. The Secretary executes these coordination responsibilities, in part, by engaging directly with the President and relevant Cabinet, department, agency, and DHS component heads as is necessary to ensure a focused, efficient, and unified Federal preparedness posture. All Federal departments and agencies, in turn, cooperate with the Secretary in executing domestic incident management duties.

The Secretary's responsibilities also include management of the broad "emergency management" and "response" authorities of FEMA and other DHS components. DHS component heads may have lead

response roles or other significant roles depending on the type and severity of the incident. For example, the U.S. Secret Service is the lead agency for security design, planning, and implementation of National Special Security Events (NSSE) while the Assistant Secretary for Cybersecurity and Communications coordinates the response to significant cyber incidents.

### ***FEMA Administrator***

The Administrator is the principal advisor to the President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Homeland Security Council regarding emergency management. The FEMA Administrator's duties include assisting the President, through the Secretary, in carrying out the Stafford Act, operation of the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC), the effective support of all ESFs, and more generally, preparation for, protection against, response to, and recovery from all-hazards incidents. Reporting to the Secretary of Homeland Security, the FEMA Administrator is also responsible for managing the core DHS grant programs supporting homeland security activities.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Attorney General***

Like other Executive Branch departments and agencies, the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will endeavor to coordinate their activities with other members of the law enforcement community, and with members of the Intelligence Community, to achieve maximum cooperation consistent with the law and operational necessity.

The Attorney General has lead responsibility for criminal investigations of terrorist acts or terrorist threats by individuals or groups inside the United States, or directed at United States citizens or institutions abroad, where such acts are within the Federal criminal jurisdiction of the United States, as well as for related intelligence collection activities within the United States, subject to the National Security Act of 1947 (as amended), and other applicable law, Executive Order 12333 (as amended), and Attorney General-approved procedures pursuant to that Executive Order. Generally acting through the FBI, the Attorney General, in cooperation with other Federal departments and agencies engaged in activities to protect our national security, shall also coordinate the activities of the other members of the law enforcement community to detect, prevent, preempt, and disrupt terrorist attacks against the United States. In addition, the Attorney General, generally acting through the FBI Director, has primary responsibility for searching for, finding, and neutralizing WMD within the United States.

The Attorney General approves requests submitted by state governors pursuant to the Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Act for personnel and other Federal law enforcement support during incidents. The Attorney General also enforces Federal civil rights laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Further information on the Attorney General's role is provided in the National Prevention Framework and Prevention FIOP.

### ***Secretary of Defense***

The Secretary of Defense has authority, direction, and control over the Department of Defense (DOD).<sup>21</sup> DOD resources may be committed when requested by another Federal agency and approved by the Secretary of Defense, or when directed by the President. However certain DOD

---

<sup>20</sup> See the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, enacted as part of the FY 2007 DHS Appropriations Act, P.L. 109-295.

<sup>21</sup> 10 U.S.C. §113.

officials and organizations may provide support under the immediate response authority,<sup>22</sup> a mutual aid agreement with the local community,<sup>23</sup> or pursuant to independent authorities or agreements.<sup>24</sup> When DOD resources are authorized to support civil authorities, command of those forces remains with the Secretary of Defense. DOD elements in the incident area of operations coordinate closely with response organizations at all levels.

### ***Secretary of State***

A domestic incident may have international and diplomatic implications that call for coordination and consultation with foreign governments and international organizations. The Secretary of State is responsible for all communication and coordination between the U.S. Government and other nations regarding the response to a domestic crisis. The Department of State also coordinates international offers of assistance and formally accepts or declines these offers on behalf of the U.S. Government based on needs conveyed by Federal departments and agencies as stated in the International Coordination Support Annex. Some types of international assistance are pre-identified, and bilateral agreements are already established. For example, the USDA/Forest Service and Department of the Interior have joint bilateral agreements with several countries for wildland firefighting support.

### ***Director of National Intelligence***

The Director of National Intelligence serves as the head of the Intelligence Community, acts as the principal advisor to the President for intelligence matters relating to national security, and oversees and directs implementation of the National Intelligence Program. The Intelligence Community, comprising 17 elements across the Federal Government, functions consistent with laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies to support the national security-related missions of the U.S. Government. It provides a range of analytic products, including those that assess threats to the homeland and inform planning, capability development, and operational activities of homeland security enterprise partners and stakeholders. In addition to intelligence community elements with specific homeland security missions, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence maintains a number of mission and support centers that provide unique capabilities for homeland security partners.

### ***Other Federal Department and Agency Heads***

Various Federal departments or agencies play primary, coordinating, or support roles in delivering response core capabilities. In some circumstances, other Federal agencies may have a lead or support role in coordinating operations, or elements of operations, consistent with applicable legal authorities. Nothing in the NRF precludes any Federal department or agency from executing its

---

<sup>22</sup> In response to a request for assistance from a civilian authority, under imminently serious conditions, and if time does not permit approval from higher authority, DOD officials may provide an immediate response by temporarily employing the resources under their control, subject to any supplemental direction provided by higher headquarters, to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate great property damage within the United States. Immediate response authority does not permit actions that would subject civilians to the use of military power that is regulatory, prescriptive, proscriptive, or compulsory. (DOD Directive 3025.18)

<sup>23</sup> DOD installation commanders may provide support to local jurisdictions under mutual aid agreements (also known as reciprocal fire protection agreements), when requested.

<sup>24</sup> The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has independent statutory authorities regarding emergency management, such as Section 5 of the Flood Control Act of 1941 (Public Law 84-99) (e.g., providing technical assistance; direct assistance such as providing sandbags, pumps, and other types of flood fight materials, emergency contracting; and emergency water assistance due to contaminated water source). Also, the Defense Logistics Agency has an interagency agreement with FEMA to provide commodities including fuel to civil authorities responding to disasters.



existing authorities. For all incidents, Federal department and agency heads serve as advisors for the Executive Branch relative to their areas of responsibility.

When the Secretary of Homeland Security is not coordinating the overall response, Federal departments and agencies may coordinate Federal operations under their own statutory authorities, or as designated by the President, and may activate response structures applicable to those authorities. The head of the department or agency may also request the Secretary of Homeland Security to activate NRF structures and elements (e.g. Incident Management Assistance Teams and National Operation Center elements) to provide additional assistance, while still retaining leadership for the response.

Several Federal departments and agencies have authorities to respond to and declare specific types of disasters or emergencies. These authorities may be exercised independently of, concurrently with, or become part of a Federal response coordinated by the Secretary of Homeland Security, pursuant to Presidential directive. Federal departments and agencies carry out their response authorities and responsibilities within the NRF's overarching construct or under supplementary or complementary operational plans. Table 1 provides examples of scenarios in which specific Federal departments and agencies have the responsibility for coordinating response activities. This is not an all-inclusive list.

**Table 1: Examples of Other Federal Department and Agency Authorities<sup>25</sup>**

Scenario	Department/Agency	Authorities
Agricultural and Food Incident	Department of Agriculture (USDA)	The Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to declare an <b>extraordinary emergency</b> and take action due to the presence of a pest or disease of livestock that threatens livestock in the United States. (7 U.S. Code § 8306 [2007]). The Secretary of Agriculture also has the authority to declare an <b>extraordinary emergency</b> and take action due to the presence of a plant pest or noxious weed whose presence threatens plants or plant products of the United States. (7 U.S. Code § 7715 [2007]).
Public Health Emergency <sup>26</sup>	Department of Health and Human Services	The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services has the authority to take actions to protect the public health and welfare, declare a <b>public health emergency</b> , and to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies. (Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S. Code §§ 201 <i>et seq.</i> )
Oil and Hazardous Materials Spills	EPA or USCG	The EPA and USCG have the authority to take actions to respond to oil discharges and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants, including leading the response. (42 U.S. Code § 9601, <i>et seq.</i> , 33 U.S. Code § 1251 <i>et seq.</i> ) The EPA Administrator and Commandant of the USCG <sup>27</sup> may also classify an oil discharge as a <b>Spill of National Significance</b> and designate senior officials to participate in the response. (40 CFR § 300.323). <sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> These authorities may be exercised independently of, concurrently with, or become part of a Federal response coordinated by the Secretary of Homeland Security pursuant to Presidential directive.

<sup>26</sup> A declaration of a public health emergency may make available any funds appropriated to the Public Health Emergency Fund.

<sup>27</sup> The Commandant of the USCG coordinates the designation of a Spill of National Significance with the Secretary of Homeland Security, as appropriate.

<sup>28</sup> See the ESF #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response Annex for more information on these authorities.

When a Federal department, agency, or component of DHS has responsibility for directing or managing a major aspect of a response coordinated by the Secretary of Homeland Security, that organization is part of the national leadership for the incident and is represented in field, regional, and headquarters unified command and coordination organizations.

Additional information regarding Federal department and agency roles in delivering core capabilities may be found in the Coordinating Structures and Integration section and in the various annexes to this Framework.

## **Core Capabilities**

---

Once an incident occurs, efforts focus on saving lives, protecting property and the environment, and preserving the social, economic, cultural, and political structure of the jurisdiction. Depending on the size, scope, and magnitude of an incident, local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, and, in some cases, the Federal Government, may be called to action. The response core capabilities are the activities that generally must be accomplished in incident response regardless of which levels of government are involved.

These core capabilities were developed based on the results of the SNRA which identified a variety of threats and hazards that pose a significant risk to the Nation. Each mission area—Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery—identified functions that would be required to address these threats and hazards; these are the core capabilities. The core capabilities are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the Goal. They provide a common vocabulary describing the significant functions that must be developed and executed across the whole community to ensure national preparedness.

This section addresses the core capabilities for the Response mission area and the actions required to build and deliver these capabilities.

### ***Context of the Response Mission Area***

By engaging the whole community to build and deliver the response core capabilities, the Nation is better prepared to respond to any threat or hazard, assist in restoring basic services and community functionality, and facilitate the integration of recovery activities. The Response mission area includes 15 core capabilities—12 that apply to response and 3 that are common to all 5 mission areas. Table 2 lists the core capabilities associated with each of the five mission areas.

Table 2: Core Capabilities by Mission Area<sup>29</sup>

Prevention	Protection	Mitigation	Response	Recovery
<b>Planning</b>				
<b>Public Information and Warning</b>				
<b>Operational Coordination</b>				
<b>Intelligence and Information Sharing</b>		<b>Community Resilience</b>	<b>Infrastructure Systems</b>	
<b>Interdiction and Disruption</b>			<b>Critical Transportation</b>	<b>Economic Recovery</b>
<b>Screening, Search, and Detection</b>				<b>Environmental Response/Health and Safety</b>
<b>Forensics and Attribution</b>	<b>Access Control and Identity Verification</b>	<b>Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment</b>	<b>Fatality Management Services</b>	<b>Housing</b>
	<b>Cybersecurity</b>	<b>Threats and Hazards Identification</b>	<b>Fire Management and Suppression</b>	<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>
	<b>Physical Protective Measures</b>		<b>Logistics and Supply Chain Management</b>	
	<b>Risk Management for Protection Programs and Activities</b>		<b>Mass Care Services</b>	
	<b>Supply Chain Integrity and Security</b>		<b>Mass Search and Rescue Operations</b>	
			<b>On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement</b>	
			<b>Operational Communications</b>	
			<b>Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services</b>	
			<b>Situational Assessment</b>	

<sup>29</sup> Planning, Public Information and Warning, and Operational Coordination are common to all mission areas.

Table 3 provides a summary of each response core capability and the critical tasks to achieve its objective.

**Table 3: Overview of Response Core Capabilities in the National Preparedness Goal**

Core Capabilities and Critical Tasks	
<p><b>1. Planning</b> (Cross-cutting with all mission areas)</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Conduct a systematic process engaging the whole community as appropriate in the development of executable strategic, operational, and/or tactical-level approaches to meet defined objectives.</p>
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop operational plans that adequately identify critical objectives based on the planning requirements, provide a complete and integrated picture of the sequence and scope of the tasks to achieve the objectives, and are implementable within the time frame contemplated in the plan using available resources.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Public Information and Warning</b> (Cross-cutting with all mission areas)</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard and, as appropriate, the actions being taken and the assistance being made available.</p>
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform all affected segments of society by all means necessary, including accessible tools in multiple formats of critical lifesaving and life-sustaining information to expedite the delivery of emergency services and aid the public in taking protective actions.</li> <li>Deliver credible and actionable messages to inform ongoing emergency services and the public about protective measures and other life-sustaining actions and facilitate the integration of recovery activities.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Operational Coordination</b> (Cross-cutting with all mission areas)</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.</p>
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilize all critical resources and establish command, control, and coordination structures within the affected community and other coordinating bodies in surrounding communities and across the Nation and maintain as needed throughout the duration of an incident.</li> <li>Enhance and maintain command, control, and coordination structures, consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), to meet basic human needs, stabilize the incident, and facilitate the integration of restoration and recovery activities.</li> </ul>	

Core Capabilities and Critical Tasks	
<b>4. Critical Transportation</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Provide transportation (including infrastructure access and accessible transportation services) for response priority objectives, including the evacuation of people and animals, and the delivery of vital response personnel, equipment, and services into the affected areas.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor and report the status of and damage to the transportation system and infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ Identify temporary alternative transportation solutions to be implemented when primary systems or routes are unavailable or overwhelmed.</li> <li>▪ Implement appropriate air traffic and airspace management measures.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate regulatory waivers and exemptions.</li> <li>▪ Provide longer-term coordination of the restoration and recovery of the affected transportation systems and infrastructure if required.</li> <li>▪ Ensure basic human needs are met, stabilize the incident, transition into recovery for an affected area, and restore basic services and community functionality.</li> <li>▪ Clear debris from any route type (i.e., road, rail, airfield, port facility, waterway) to facilitate response operations.</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Environmental Response/Health and Safety</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Conduct appropriate measures to ensure the protection of the health and safety of the public and workers, as well as the environment, from all-hazards in support of responder operations and the affected communities.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify, assess, and mitigate worker health and safety hazards and disseminate health and safety guidance and resources to response and recovery workers.</li> <li>▪ Minimize public exposure to environmental hazards through assessment of the hazards and implementation of public protective actions.</li> <li>▪ Detect, assess, stabilize, and clean up releases of oil and hazardous materials into the environment, including buildings/structures, and properly manage waste.</li> <li>▪ Identify, evaluate, and implement measures to prevent and minimize impacts to the environment, natural and cultural resources, and historic properties from all-hazard emergencies and response operations.</li> </ul>	
<b>6. Fatality Management Services</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Provide fatality management services, including decedent remains recovery and victim identification, working with local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal authorities to provide mortuary processes, temporary storage or permanent internment solutions, sharing information with mass care services for the purpose of reunifying family members and caregivers with missing persons/remains, and providing counseling to the bereaved.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish and maintain operations to recover a significant number of fatalities over a geographically dispersed area.</li> <li>▪ Mitigate hazards from remains, facilitate care to survivors, and return remains for final disposition.</li> </ul>	

Core Capabilities and Critical Tasks	
<b>7. Fire Management and Suppression</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Provide structural, wildland, and specialized firefighting capabilities to manage and suppress fires of all types, kinds, and complexities while protecting the lives, property, and the environment in the affected area.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide traditional first response or initial attack firefighting services.</li> <li>▪ Conduct expanded or extended attack firefighting and support operations through coordinated response of fire management and specialized fire suppression resources.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the coordinated deployment of appropriate local, regional, national, and international fire management and fire suppression resources to reinforce firefighting efforts and maintain an appropriate level of protection for subsequent fires.</li> </ul>	
<b>8. Infrastructure Systems</b> <i>(Cross-cutting with Recovery mission area)</i>	<b>Objective:</b> Stabilize critical infrastructure functions, minimize health and safety threats, and efficiently restore and revitalize systems and services to support a viable, resilient community.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decrease and stabilize immediate infrastructure threats to the affected population, to include survivors in the heavily- damaged zone, nearby communities that may be affected by cascading effects, and mass care support facilities and evacuation processing centers with a focus on life-sustainment and congregate care services.</li> <li>▪ Re-establish critical infrastructure within the affected areas to support ongoing emergency response operations, life sustainment, community functionality, and facilitate the integration of recovery activities.</li> <li>▪ Provide for the clearance, removal, and disposal of debris.</li> <li>▪ Formalize partnerships with governmental and private sector cyber incident or emergency response teams to accept, triage, and collaboratively respond to cascading impacts in an efficient manner.</li> </ul>	
<b>9. Mass Care Services</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Provide life-sustaining and human services to the affected population, to include hydration, feeding, sheltering, temporary housing, evacuee support, reunification, and distribution of emergency supplies.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Move and deliver resources and capabilities to meet the needs of disaster survivors, including children and adults with disabilities and/or access and functional needs.</li> <li>▪ Establish, staff, and equip emergency shelters and other temporary housing options ensuring that shelters and temporary housing units are physically accessible for children and adults with disabilities and/or with access and functional needs.</li> <li>▪ Move from congregate care to non-congregate care alternatives, and provide relocation assistance or interim housing solutions for families unable to return to their pre-disaster homes.</li> </ul>	

Core Capabilities and Critical Tasks	
<b>10. Mass Search and Rescue Operations</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Deliver traditional and atypical search and rescue capabilities, including personnel, services, animals, and assets to survivors in need, with the goal of saving the greatest number of endangered lives in the shortest time possible.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct search and rescue operations to locate and rescue persons in distress.</li> <li>▪ Initiate community-based search and rescue support operations across a wide geographically dispersed area.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the synchronized deployment of local, regional, national, and international teams to reinforce ongoing search and rescue efforts and facilitate the integration of recovery activities.</li> </ul>	
<b>11. On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Ensure a safe and secure environment through law enforcement and related security and protection operations for people and communities located within affected areas and also for response personnel engaged in lifesaving and life-sustaining operations.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a safe and secure environment in an affected area.</li> <li>▪ Provide and maintain on-scene security and meet the protection needs of the affected population over a geographically dispersed area while eliminating or mitigating the risk of further damage to persons, property, and the environment.</li> </ul>	
<b>12. Operational Communications</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the capacity to communicate with both the emergency response community and the affected populations and establish interoperable voice and data communications between local, state, tribal, territorial, and Federal first responders.</li> <li>▪ Re-establish sufficient communications infrastructure within the affected areas to support ongoing life-sustaining activities, provide basic human needs, and facilitate the integration of recovery activities.</li> <li>▪ Re-establish critical information networks, including cybersecurity information-sharing networks, in order to inform situational awareness, enable incident response, and support the resiliency of key systems.</li> </ul>	
<b>13. Logistics and Supply Chain Management</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Deliver essential commodities, equipment, and services in support of impacted communities and survivors, to include emergency power and fuel support, as well as the coordination of access to community staples. Synchronize logistics capabilities and enable the restoration of impacted supply chains.
<p><b>Critical Tasks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mobilize and deliver governmental, nongovernmental, and private sector resources within and outside of the affected area to save lives, sustain lives, meet basic human needs, stabilize the incident, and facilitate the integration of recovery efforts, to include moving and delivering resources and services to meet the needs of disaster survivors.</li> <li>▪ Enhance public and private resource and services support for an affected area.</li> </ul>	

Core Capabilities and Critical Tasks	
<b>14. Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Provide lifesaving medical treatment via Emergency Medical Services and related operations and avoid additional disease and injury by providing targeted public health, medical, and behavioral health support, and products to all affected populations.
<b>Critical Tasks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver medical countermeasures to exposed populations.</li> <li>▪ Complete triage and initial stabilization of illness or casualties and begin definitive care for those likely to benefit from care and survive. Develop public health interventions to maintain and improve the health of individuals placed at risk due to disruptions in healthcare and societal support networks.</li> <li>▪ Return medical surge resources to pre-incident levels, complete health assessments, and identify recovery processes.</li> </ul>	
<b>15. Situational Assessment</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Provide all decision makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.
<b>Critical Tasks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver information sufficient to inform decision making regarding immediate lifesaving and life-sustaining activities, and engage governmental, private, and civic sector resources within and outside of the affected area to meet basic human needs and stabilize the incident.</li> <li>▪ Deliver enhanced information to reinforce ongoing lifesaving and life-sustaining activities, and engage governmental, private, and civic sector resources within and outside of the affected area to meet basic human needs, stabilize the incident, and facilitate the integration of recovery activities.</li> </ul>	

No core capability is the responsibility of any one party or single level of government. Each requires an approach that integrates the abilities of elements in the whole community from the individual through the Federal Government, including traditional and non-traditional partners. The Nation must be prepared to deal not only with the normal type of incidents that communities handle every day, but also with incidents of catastrophic proportions. Most of the resources and functions required at the local level to deliver a given core capability are provided by local government agencies with additional members of the community assisting as needed. Catastrophic incidents require many more response assets and engagement with a broader set of partners.<sup>30</sup> Community involvement is vital to providing additional response support. Local residents may well be the primary source of additional manpower in the first hours and days after a catastrophic incident.

### Cross-cutting Response Core Capabilities

Three response core capabilities—Planning, Public Information and Warning, and Operational Coordination—span all five mission areas. These common core capabilities are essential to the success of the other core capabilities. They help establish unity of effort among all those involved in the Response mission area.

<sup>30</sup> Given the scope and magnitude of a catastrophic incident, waivers, exceptions, and exemptions to policy, regulations, and laws may be available in order to save and sustain life, and to protect property and the environment. However, any such waivers, exceptions, and exemptions must be consistent with laws that preserve human and civil rights and protect individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.



- **Planning.** Planning makes it possible to manage the life cycle of a potential crisis, determine capability requirements, and help stakeholders learn their roles. It includes the collection, analysis, and dissemination of risk assessment data and the development of plans, procedures, mutual aid and assistance agreements, strategies, and other arrangements to perform specific missions and tasks. Governments at all levels have a responsibility to develop all-hazards response plans prior to and during an incident. Including a broad range of partners in the planning process helps ensure that the needs and potential contributions of all elements are integrated into workable plans.

In addition, governments at all levels should establish continuity plans to ensure seamless and immediate continuation of mission-essential functions during an incident. Continuity plans should identify essential functions, succession and delegation of authority, continuity facilities, communication capabilities, and human resource issues.

- **Public Information and Warning.** For an effective response, jurisdictions must provide accurate and accessible information to decision makers and the public. This includes development of accessible message content, such as incident facts, health risk warnings, pre-incident recommendations, evacuation guidance, and other protective measures. It also includes developing strategies for when, where, how, and by whom information will be delivered and ensuring that all levels of government agree on unified messages. Information must be shared with the public and other members of the response community efficiently, effectively, and in an accessible manner. Effective public information and warning is particularly important in dealing with incidents that start small but may evolve to have greater consequences.
- **Operational Coordination.** For incident response, coordination of operations must occur both among those tasked to deliver the various response core capabilities and with those delivering the core capabilities of other mission areas. This coordination occurs through response structures based on clearly established roles, responsibilities, and reporting protocols. Using NIMS principles, structures, and coordinating processes enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of response. Specific actions to achieve this core capability may include coordinating initial actions, managing ESFs, coordinating requests for additional support, and identifying and integrating resources and capabilities.

## Integration among Response Core Capabilities and Mission Areas

Interdependencies exist among many of the core capabilities. For example, organizations involved in providing Mass Care Services often rely on resources and functions from organizations that provide Critical Transportation or Logistics and Supply Chain Management for commodities distribution; Public Information and Warning for messaging, translators, and interpreters; and Operational Communications for reporting and communication that allows shelters to stay in touch with operations centers.

The core capabilities in various mission areas may also be linked through shared assets and services. For example, the functionality provided by geographic information systems can be applied across multiple response core capabilities, as well as core capabilities in the other four mission areas. Thus synergy among mission area resources and processes is important to maximize capabilities and minimize risk. The overarching nature of functions described in these capabilities frequently involves either support to or cooperation of several incident management partners to ensure the seamless integration of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery activities.

Potential points of intersection between the Response mission area and other mission areas include the following:

- **Prevention.** Many Response and Prevention mission area decisions will have interdependencies upon operations. Strong operational coordination and information sharing between these mission areas will best position the whole community to save lives, protect property, and prevent terrorist attacks and follow-on attacks. As an example, Prevention activities may identify and locate WMD material. The sharing of this information along with technical data will inform response activities resulting in swift public information and warning and protective guidance.
- **Protection.** Protection of critical infrastructure systems and implementation of plans for the rapid restoration of commercial activities and critical infrastructure operations are crucial aspects of the Protection mission area. Many of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors<sup>31</sup> within the Protection mission area are also represented in the Response mission area. For example, the Logistics and Supply Chain Management capability depends on private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure for achieving the capability's objective.
- **Mitigation.** Achieving the mitigation core capability preliminary targets allows for the incorporation of lessons learned in the analysis and planning processes and makes the response core capabilities more resilient and effective.
- **Recovery.** Even while response activities are underway, recovery operations must begin. The emphasis on response gradually gives way to recovery operations; however, recovery core capabilities may involve some of the same functions as response core capabilities. This includes providing essential public health and safety services, restoring interrupted utility and other essential services, reestablishing transportation routes, providing food and shelter for those displaced by an incident, protecting natural and cultural resources and performing environmental compliance, ensuring equal access, reunifying children who have been displaced from their families/guardians, and reopening schools and child care centers.

These overlapping areas are identified through comprehensive planning with the whole community to ensure that they are properly addressed during the response to an incident. Ensuring that operational plans properly account for the integration of mission areas is essential.

## *Response Actions to Deliver Core Capabilities*

This section describes the key tasks each major element of the whole community must accomplish to be prepared to deliver the core capabilities. More detailed concepts of operations for the delivery of the core capabilities are provided in the Response FIOP and operational plans developed by various jurisdictions, the private sector, and NGOs.

### **Individuals and Households**

Many individuals have talents and experience that can be tapped to support core capabilities. Individuals can contribute to the delivery of response core capabilities through community organizations, by participating in community preparedness activities, such as CERT, and by ensuring that they have household/family emergency plans.<sup>32</sup>

### **Private Sector**

Roles and responsibilities of private sector entities are described in the Roles and Responsibilities section. Private sector entities can assist in delivering the response core capabilities by collaborating

---

<sup>31</sup> The critical infrastructure sectors are described in the 2013 National Infrastructure Protection Plan.

<sup>32</sup> Individual and household preparedness information can be located at <http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>.

with emergency management personnel before an incident occurs to determine what assistance may be necessary and how they can support local emergency management during response operations.<sup>33</sup>

## Nongovernmental Organizations

NGOs manage volunteers and resources that bolster government efforts to ensure a successful incident response. Collaboration with responders, governments at all levels, and other agencies and organizations helps NGOs to tailor and direct their efforts that are necessary to accomplish and deliver the response core capabilities.

## Local, State, and Tribal Actions

Communities apply NIMS principles to integrate response plans and resources across jurisdictions and departments as well as with the private sector and NGOs. Neighboring communities play a key role by providing support through a network of mutual aid and assistance agreements that identify the resources that communities may be able to share during an incident.

The state is the gateway to many government resources that help communities respond. When an incident grows or has the potential to grow beyond the capability of a local jurisdiction and responders cannot meet the needs with mutual aid and assistance resources, local officials contact the state. Tribes may request assistance from the state or the Federal Government. Upon receiving a request for assistance from a local or tribal government, state officials may:

- Coordinate warnings and public information through the activation of the state's public communications strategy.
- Distribute supplies stockpiled to meet the needs of the emergency.
- Provide technical assistance and support to meet the response and recovery needs.
- Suspend or waive statutes, rules, ordinances, and orders, to the extent permitted by law, to ensure timely performance of response functions.
- Implement state volunteer and donations management plans and coordinate with the private sector and NGOs.
- Order or recommend evacuations ensuring the integration and inclusion of the requirements of populations such as children; individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs; those from religious, racial, and ethnically diverse communities; people with limited English proficiency; and owners of animals, including household pets and service and assistance animals.
- Mobilize resources to meet the requirements of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs in compliance with Federal civil rights laws.

If local resources are inadequate, local authorities may seek assistance from the county emergency manager or the state. Under some Federal authorities, local jurisdictions and tribes may also seek assistance directly from the Federal Government for non-Stafford Act incidents.

## State-to-State Assistance

If additional resources are required, states can request assistance from other states through interstate mutual aid and assistance agreements such as EMAC. Administered by the National Emergency

---

<sup>33</sup> Additional information sharing and collaborative opportunities can be located at FEMA Private Sector Focus <http://www.fema.gov/private-sector>.

Management Association, EMAC is an interstate mutual aid agreement that streamlines the interstate mutual aid and assistance process.

### **Federal Authorities**

Federal assistance can be provided to state, local, and tribal jurisdictions, as well as to other Federal departments and agencies, through a number of different mechanisms and authorities. Federal financial assistance may also be available for disability-related access and functional needs equipment.

#### ***Federal Response and Assistance Available Without a Stafford Act Declaration***

The NRF covers the full range of complex and constantly changing requirements in anticipation of, or in response to, threats or actual incidents. In addition to Stafford Act support, the NRF or other supplementary or complementary operational plans may be applied to respond or provide other forms of support.

#### **Federal Departments and Agencies Acting Under Their Own Authorities**

Immediate lifesaving assistance to states, as well as other types of assistance, such as wildland firefighting support or response to an agricultural disease or cybersecurity incident, are performed by Federal departments or agencies under their own authorities and funding or through reciprocal mutual assistance agreements. Some Federal departments or agencies conduct or may lead Federal response actions under their own authorities using funding sources other than the President's Disaster Relief Fund. For example, specific trust funds are established under Federal environmental laws to support and fund oil and hazardous substances response operations.

#### **Federal-to-Federal Support**

Federal departments and agencies may execute interagency or intra-agency reimbursable agreements in accordance with the Economy Act or other applicable authorities. The Financial Management Support Annex to the NRF contains information about this process. A Federal department or agency responding to an incident under its own authorities may also request support from the Secretary of Homeland Security in obtaining and coordinating additional Federal assistance. The Secretary of Homeland Security may activate one or more ESFs to provide the requested support.

#### ***Federal Response and Assistance Under the Stafford Act***

The Federal Government may provide assistance in the form of funding, resources, and services. Federal departments and agencies respect the sovereignty and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments while rendering assistance that supports the affected local or state governments.

#### **Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act**

Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments do not require Federal assistance to respond to most incidents; however, when an incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and local governments, the governor or Chief Executive of a tribe can request Federal assistance under the Stafford Act. In certain circumstances, the President may declare an emergency without a request from a governor when the primary responsibility for response rests with the United States, because the emergency involves a subject area for which, under the Constitution or laws of the United States, the United States exercises exclusive or preeminent responsibility and authority.

The Stafford Act authorizes the President to provide financial and other assistance to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, certain private nonprofit organizations, and individuals to support response, recovery, and mitigation efforts following a Stafford Act Emergency or Major Disaster Declaration.<sup>34</sup> Most forms of Stafford Act assistance require a state cost share. While Federal assistance under the Stafford Act may only be delivered after a declaration, FEMA may pre-deploy Federal assets when a declaration is likely and imminent. The Stafford Act provides for two types of declarations:

- An **Emergency Declaration** is more limited in scope than a Major Disaster Declaration, provides fewer Federal programs, and is not normally associated with recovery programs. However, the President may issue an Emergency Declaration prior to an actual incident to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe. Generally, Federal assistance and funding are provided to meet specific emergency needs or to help prevent a catastrophe from occurring.
- A **Major Disaster Declaration** provides more Federal programs for response and recovery than an Emergency Declaration. Unlike an Emergency Declaration, a Major Disaster Declaration may only be issued after an incident.

### **Proactive Response to Catastrophic Incidents**

Prior to and during catastrophic incidents, especially those that occur with little or no notice, the Federal Government may mobilize and deploy assets in anticipation of a formal request from the state. Such deployments of significant Federal assets would occur in anticipation of or following catastrophic incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive WMD; large-magnitude earthquakes; or other incidents affecting heavily populated areas. Proactive efforts are intended to ensure that Federal resources reach the scene in time to assist in reducing disruption of normal functions of state and local governments and are done in coordination and collaboration with local and state governments, private sector entities, and NGOs when possible.

---

<sup>34</sup> The President has delegated most of his authority under the Stafford Act to the Secretary of Homeland Security, who has, in turn, delegated those authorities to the FEMA Administrator.

## Coordinating Structures and Integration

Coordinating structures aid preparedness and response at all levels of government and within the private sector, communities, and nongovernmental entities. The structures help organize and measure the whole community's capabilities in order to address the requirements of the Response mission area, facilitate problem solving, improve access to response resources, and foster coordination prior to and following an incident.

Scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures are essential in aligning the key roles and responsibilities to deliver the Response mission area's core capabilities. The flexibility of such structures helps ensure that communities across the country can organize response efforts to address a variety of risks based on their unique needs, capabilities, demographics, governing structures, and non-traditional partners. The NRF is not based on a one-size-fits-all organizational construct, but instead acknowledges the concept of tiered response, which emphasizes that response to incidents should be handled at the lowest jurisdictional level capable of handling the mission. These structures can be partially or fully implemented in the context of a threat, in anticipation of a significant event, or in response to an incident. Selective implementation allows for a scaled response, delivery of the exact resources that are needed, and a level of coordination appropriate to each incident.

The following section describes the coordinating structures within the Response mission area and explains how they integrate with the coordinating structures that support other mission areas to build preparedness and enhance the Nation's resilience to all types of risks and hazards.

### *Local Coordinating Structures*

Local jurisdictions and states employ a variety of coordinating structures to help identify risks, establish relationships, organize, and build capabilities. Due to the unique partnerships, geographic conditions, threats, and established capabilities each jurisdiction faces, the coordinating structures at these levels vary.

Examples of local response coordinating structures include local planning committees, CERTs, and chapters of national-level associations. These structures organize and integrate their capabilities and resources with neighboring jurisdictions, the state, the private sector, and NGOs.

### *State and Territorial Coordinating Structures*

States and territories also leverage the capabilities and resources of partners across the state/territory when identifying needs and building capabilities. The coordinating structures at the state or territorial level also vary depending on factors such as geography, population, industry, and the capabilities of the local jurisdictions within the state. These structures are also designed to leverage appropriate representatives from across the whole community, some of whom may also participate in local or regional coordinating structures. Many states or territories create independent committees or councils focused on specific areas or functions as a sub-set of their emergency management agency.

### *Tribal Coordinating Structures*

The Tribal Assistance Coordination Group, or TAC-G, is a Multiagency Coordination (MAC) group that assists federally-recognized tribes during emergencies and disasters, as well as providing information and technical assistance for tribal emergency management programs. The TAC-G is led and managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Emergency Management (BIA EM) Program. The TAC-G consists of partners from all levels of government (local, county, state, tribal, Federal, etc.) as

well as non-profit aid organizations and the private sector. This coordinating body is instrumental in executing the responsibilities of the Tribal Coordination Support Annex (TCSA).

### *Private Sector Coordinating Structures*

Business EOCs, industry trade groups, and private sector information and intelligence centers serve as coordinating structures for the private sector. These organizations, composed of multiple businesses and entities brought together by shared geography or common function (e.g., banking, supply chain management, transportation, venue management), support the collaboration, communication, and sharing of information within the private sector. Such organizations can coordinate with and support NGOs, and in many cases they serve as a conduit to local and state government coordinating structures.

### *Federal Coordinating Structures*

#### **National Security Council**

The National Security Council (NSC) is the principal policy body for consideration of national security policy issues requiring Presidential determination. The NSC advises and assists the President in integrating all aspects of national security policy as it affects the United States—domestic, foreign, military, intelligence, and economic (in conjunction with the National Economic Council). Along with its subordinate committees, the NSC is the President’s principal means for coordinating Executive Branch departments and agencies in the development and implementation of national security policy.

#### **Emergency Support Functions**

The Federal Government and many state governments organize their response resources and capabilities under the ESF construct. ESFs have proven to be an effective way to bundle and manage resources to deliver core capabilities. The Federal ESFs are the primary, but not exclusive, Federal coordinating structures for building, sustaining, and delivering the response core capabilities. Most Federal ESFs support a number of the response core capabilities. In addition, there are responsibilities and actions associated with Federal ESFs that extend beyond the core capabilities and support other response activities, as well as department and agency responsibilities.

The Federal ESFs bring together the capabilities of Federal departments and agencies and other national-level assets. ESFs are not based on the capabilities of a single department or agency, and the functions for which they are responsible cannot be accomplished by any single department or agency. Instead, Federal ESFs are groups of organizations that work together to deliver core capabilities and support an effective response.

As noted above, many local, state, and tribal jurisdictions have adopted and tailored the ESF construct. Because state and local jurisdictions establish ESFs based on their specific risks and requirements, there is no mandatory or direct linkage to the Federal ESFs. Local and state governments are encouraged to engage members of the whole community as part of whatever coordinating processes they use.

Table 4 summarizes the Federal ESFs and indicates the response core capabilities each ESF most directly supports. All ESFs support the common core capabilities—Planning, Public Information and Warning, and Operational Coordination—and many ESFs support more than those that are listed.

**Table 4: Emergency Support Functions and ESF Coordinators**

<p><b>ESF #1—Transportation</b>  <b>ESF Coordinator: Department of Transportation</b></p>
<p>Key Response Core Capability: Critical Transportation</p>
<p>Coordinates the support of management of transportation systems and infrastructure, the regulation of transportation, management of the Nation’s airspace, and ensuring the safety and security of the national transportation system. Functions include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transportation modes management and control</li> <li>▪ Transportation safety</li> <li>▪ Stabilization and reestablishment of transportation infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Movement restrictions</li> <li>▪ Damage and impact assessment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESF #2—Communications</b>  <b>ESF Coordinator: DHS/Cybersecurity and Communications</b></p>
<p>Key Response Core Capability: Operational Communications, Infrastructure Systems</p>
<p>Coordinates government and industry efforts for the reestablishment and provision of critical communications infrastructure, facilitates the stabilization of systems and applications from malicious cyber activity, and coordinates communications support to response efforts. Functions include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination with telecommunications and information technology industries</li> <li>▪ Coordination of the reestablishment and provision of critical communications infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Protection, reestablishment, and sustainment of national cyber and information technology resources</li> <li>▪ Oversight of communications within the Federal response structures</li> <li>▪ Facilitation of the stabilization of systems and applications from cyber events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESF #3—Public Works and Engineering</b>  <b>ESF Coordinator: DOD/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</b></p>
<p>Key Response Core Capabilities: Infrastructure Systems, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Environmental Response/Health and Safety, Fatality Management, Mass Care Services, Mass Search and Rescue Operations</p>
<p>Coordinates the capabilities and resources to facilitate the delivery of services, technical assistance, engineering expertise, construction management, and other support to prepare for, respond to, and/or recover from a disaster or an incident. Functions include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Infrastructure protection and emergency repair</li> <li>▪ Critical infrastructure reestablishment</li> <li>▪ Engineering services and construction management</li> <li>▪ Emergency contracting support for lifesaving and life-sustaining services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESF #4—Firefighting</b>  <b>ESF Coordinator: USDA/U.S. Forest Service and DHS/FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration</b></p>
<p>Key Response Core Capabilities: Operational Communications Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Infrastructure Systems On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services, Fire Management and Suppression, Situational Assessment</p>
<p>Coordinates the support for the detection and suppression of fires. Functions include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support to wildland, rural, and urban firefighting operations.</li> </ul>



**ESF #5—Information and Planning****ESF Coordinator: DHS/FEMA**

Key Response Core Capabilities: Situational Assessment, Planning, Public Information and Warning

Supports and facilitates multiagency planning and coordination for operations involving incidents requiring Federal coordination. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Incident action planning
- Information collection, analysis, and dissemination.

**ESF #6—Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services****ESF Coordinator: DHS/FEMA**

Key Response Core Capabilities: Mass Care Services, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services, Critical Transportation, Fatality Management Services

Coordinates the delivery of mass care and emergency assistance. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Mass care
- Emergency assistance
- Temporary housing
- Human services.

**ESF #7—Logistics****ESF Coordinator: General Services Administration and DHS/FEMA**

Key Response Core Capabilities: Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Mass Care Services, Critical Transportation, Infrastructure Systems, Operational Communications

Coordinates comprehensive incident resource planning, management, and sustainment capability to meet the needs of disaster survivors and responders. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive, national incident logistics planning, management, and sustainment capability
- Resource support (e.g., facility space, office equipment and supplies, contracting services).

**ESF #8—Public Health and Medical Services****ESF Coordinator: Department of Health and Human Services**

Key Response Core Capabilities: Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services, Fatality Management Services, Mass Care Services, Critical Transportation, Public Information and Warning, Environmental Response/Health and Safety, Logistics and Supply Chain Management

Coordinates the mechanisms for assistance in response to an actual or potential public health and medical disaster or incident. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Public health
- Medical surge support including patient movement
- Behavioral health services
- Mass fatality management.

**ESF #9—Search and Rescue****ESF Coordinator: DHS/FEMA**

Key Response Core Capability: Mass Search and Rescue Operations

Coordinates the rapid deployment of search and rescue resources to provide specialized lifesaving assistance. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Structural collapse (urban) search and rescue
- Maritime/coastal/waterborne search and rescue
- Land search and rescue.

**ESF #10—Oil and Hazardous Materials Response**

**ESF Coordinator: Environmental Protection Agency**

Key Response Core Capabilities: Environmental Response/Health and Safety, Critical Transportation, Infrastructure Systems, Public Information and Warning

Coordinates support in response to an actual or potential discharge and/or release of oil or hazardous materials. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Environmental assessment of the nature and extent of oil and hazardous materials contamination
- Environmental decontamination and cleanup, including buildings/structures and management of contaminated waste.

**ESF #11—Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**ESF Coordinator: Department of Agriculture**

Key Response Core Capabilities: Mass Care Services, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management

Coordinates a variety of functions designed to protect the Nation's food supply, respond to plant and animal pest and disease outbreaks, and protect natural and cultural resources. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Nutrition assistance
- Animal and agricultural health issue response
- Technical expertise, coordination, and support of animal and agricultural emergency management
- Meat, poultry, and processed egg products safety and defense
- Natural and cultural resources and historic properties protection.

**ESF #12—Energy**

**ESF Coordinator: Department of Energy**

Key Response Core Capabilities: Infrastructure Systems, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Situational Assessment

Facilitates the reestablishment of damaged energy systems and components and provides technical expertise during an incident involving radiological/nuclear materials. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Energy infrastructure assessment, repair, and reestablishment
- Energy industry utilities coordination
- Energy forecast.

**ESF #13—Public Safety and Security**

**ESF Coordinator: Department of Justice/Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives**

Key Response Core Capability: On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement

Coordinates the integration of public safety and security capabilities and resources to support the full range of incident management activities. Functions include but are not limited to:

- Facility and resource security
- Security planning and technical resource assistance
- Public safety and security support
- Support to access, traffic, and crowd control.

**ESF #14—Superseded by National Disaster Recovery Framework****ESF #15—External Affairs****ESF Coordinator: DHS**

Key Response Core Capability: Public Information and Warning

Coordinates the release of accurate, coordinated, timely, and accessible public information to affected audiences, including the government, media, NGOs, and the private sector. Works closely with state and local officials to ensure outreach to the whole community. Functions include, but are not limited to:

- Public affairs and the Joint Information Center
- Intergovernmental (local, state, tribal, and territorial) affairs
- Congressional affairs
- Private sector outreach
- All Hazards Emergency Response Operations Tribal.

***ESF Member Roles and Responsibilities***

ESFs are not solely attributed to any one organization, nor are they mechanisms for executing an agency's statutory authorities. Each ESF is composed of a department or agency that has been designated as the ESF coordinator along with a number of primary and support agencies. Primary agencies are designated on the basis of their authorities, resources, and capabilities. Support agencies are assigned based on resources or capabilities in a given functional area. To the extent possible, resources provided by the ESFs are identified consistently with NIMS resource typing categories.

- **ESF Coordinators.** ESF coordinators oversee the preparedness activities for a particular ESF and coordinate with its primary and support agencies. Responsibilities of the ESF coordinator include:
  - Maintaining contact with ESF primary and support agencies through conference calls, meetings, training activities, and exercises.
  - Monitoring the ESF's progress in meeting the core capabilities it supports.
  - Coordinating efforts with corresponding private sector, NGO, and Federal partners.
  - Ensuring the ESF is engaged in appropriate planning and preparedness activities.
- **Primary Agencies.** ESF primary agencies have significant authorities, roles, resources, and capabilities for a particular function within an ESF. Primary agencies are responsible for:
  - Orchestrating support within their functional area for the appropriate response core capabilities and other ESF missions.
  - Notifying and requesting assistance from support agencies.
  - Managing mission assignments (in Stafford Act incidents) and coordinating with support agencies, as well as appropriate state officials, operations centers, and other stakeholders.
  - Coordinating resources resulting from mission assignments.
  - Working with all types of organizations to maximize the use of all available resources.
  - Monitoring progress in achieving core capability and other ESF missions and providing that information as part of situational and periodic readiness or preparedness assessments.
  - Planning for incident management, short-term recovery operations, and long-term recovery.

- Maintaining trained personnel to support interagency emergency response and support teams
  - Identifying new equipment or capabilities required to prevent or respond to new or emerging threats and hazards or to validate and improve capabilities to address changing risks.
  - Promoting physical accessibility, programmatic inclusion, and effective communication for the whole community, including individuals with disabilities.
- **Support Agencies.** ESF support agencies have specific capabilities or resources that support primary agencies in executing the mission of the ESF. The activities of support agencies typically include:
- Participating in planning for incident management, short-term recovery operations, long-term-recovery, and the development of supporting operational plans, standard operating procedures, checklists, or other job aids.
  - Providing input to periodic readiness assessments.
  - Maintaining trained personnel to support interagency emergency response and support teams.
  - Identifying new equipment or capabilities required to respond to new or emerging threats and hazards, or to improve the ability to address existing threats.
  - Coordinating resources resulting from response mission assignments.
- **Emergency Support Function Leaders Group (ESFLG).** The ESFLG comprises the Federal departments and agencies that are designated as coordinators for ESFs or coordinating agencies for other NRF annexes. FEMA leads the ESFLG and is responsible for calling meetings and other administrative functions. The ESFLG provides a forum for departments and agencies with roles in Federal incident response to jointly address topics such as policies, preparedness, and training.

### ***ESF Activation***

Departments and agencies supporting Federal ESFs may be selectively activated by FEMA or as directed by the Secretary of Homeland Security to support response activities for incidents. Not all incidents requiring Federal support result in the activation of ESFs.

When departments and agencies supporting Federal ESFs are activated, they may assign staff at headquarters, regional, and incident levels. Through the Stafford Act and in accordance with 6 U.S. Code Sections 741(4) and 753(c), FEMA may issue mission assignments at all levels to obtain resources and services from Federal departments and agencies across the ESFs.

ESFs are the primary, but not exclusive, response coordinating structures at the Federal level. Communities, states, regions, and other Federal departments and agencies may use the ESF construct, or they may employ other coordinating structures or partners appropriate to their location, threats, or authorities. Whatever structures are used, they are encouraged to work closely with Federal ESFs at the incident, regional, or headquarters levels if they are activated.

### ***Non-Stafford Act Coordinating Structures***

ESFs may not always be the most appropriate response coordinating structures for non-Stafford Act incidents. For incidents in which there is no Stafford declaration, the department or agency with primary legal authority or the presidentially designated lead Federal agency may activate the coordinating structures as they see fit. These structures are generally organized consistently with NIMS concepts and principles. In addition to their own structures, departments or agencies

responding under their own legal authorities may request the Secretary of Homeland Security to activate relevant ESFs. The Secretary of Homeland Security coordinates with the head of the department or agency with primary legal authority, but retains the authority to activate ESFs or other coordinating structures, as appropriate.

### ***NRF Support Annexes***

The NRF Support Annexes describe other mechanisms by which support is organized among private sector, NGO, and Federal partners. Federal departments and agencies designated as coordinating and cooperating agencies in NRF support annexes conduct a variety of activities to include managing specific functions and missions and providing Federal support within their functional areas. The Support Annexes include:

- Critical Infrastructure
- Financial Management
- International Coordination
- Private Sector Coordination
- Tribal Coordination
- Volunteer and Donations Management
- Worker Safety and Health.

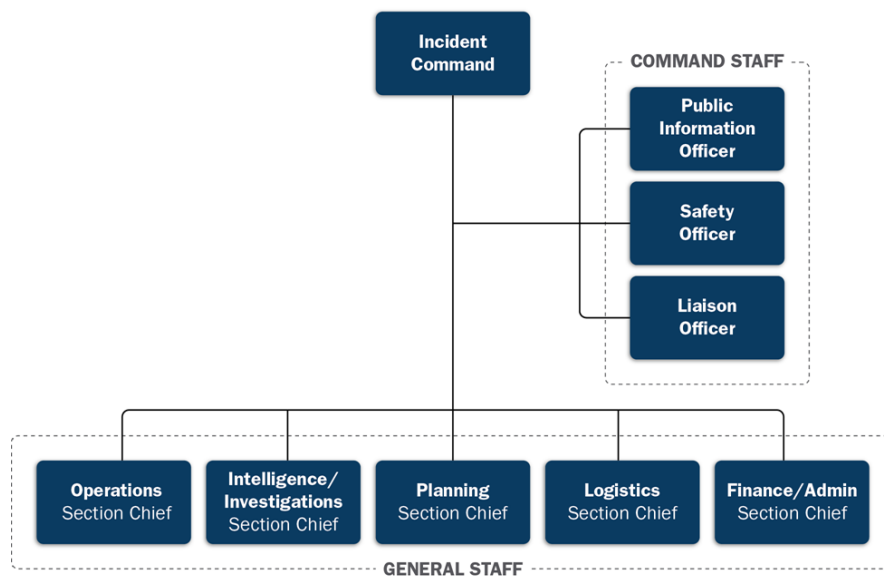
### ***Operational Coordination***

Response operations involve multiple partners and stakeholders. Operational coordination occurs at all government levels and consists of actions and activities that enable decision makers to determine appropriate courses of action and provide oversight for complex homeland security operations to achieve unity of effort and effective outcomes.

### **Local Response Operational Structures**

Emergency responders at all levels of government use ICS command and coordinating structures to manage response operations (see Figure 2). ICS is a management system designed to integrate facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications within a common organizational structure.

At the local level, coordinating structures are usually composed of entities within a specific functional area such as public works, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and fire departments. Integration among these structures occurs at an ICP, which provides on-scene incident command and management.



**Figure 2: ICS Command and General Staff**

ICS is widely used by all levels of government, as well as by private sector organizations and NGOs to organize field-level operations for a broad spectrum of incidents. ICS is a flexible organization which is structured to facilitate activities in six areas: command, operations, intelligence/investigation, planning, logistics, and finance/administration.

If the local incident commander determines that additional resources or capabilities are needed, he or she contacts the local EOC and relays requirements to the local emergency manager. Local EOC personnel facilitate multiagency coordination, help form a common operating picture of the incident, relieve on-scene command of the burden of external coordination, and secure additional resources to help meet response requirements.

EOCs at all levels of government may also encourage participation by the private sector, NGOs, academia, associations, racial and ethnic organizations, and access and functional needs subject matter experts. These members of the whole community, in turn, often maintain their own structures, such as nongovernmental or private sector EOCs.

Incident management may also involve Multiagency Coordination Groups (MAC Groups). A MAC Group is composed of senior officials, such as agency administrators, executives, or their designees, who are authorized to represent or commit agency resources and funds in support of incident activities. A MAC Group acts as an executive- or policy-level body during incidents, supporting resource prioritization and allocation, and enabling decision-making among elected and appointed officials and those responsible for managing the incident (i.e. the Incident Commander). In some communities and jurisdictions, MAC Groups are located at or near EOCs in order to authorize additional resources, approve emergency authorities, and provide guidance on emerging issues.

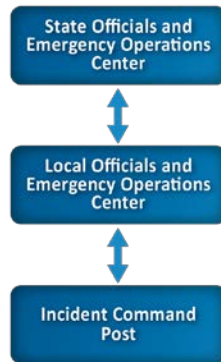
## State Response Operational Structures

The local incident command structure directs on-scene incident management activities and maintains command and control of on-scene incident operations. State EOCs are activated as necessary to support local EOCs and to ensure that responders have the resources they need to conduct response

activities. This is achieved through integration of state-level coordinating structures working with local coordinating structures or the local incident command structure.

### *State Emergency Operations Center*

State EOCs provide a common location for interagency coordination and support to local EOCs and/or incident personnel. Every state maintains an EOC to manage incidents requiring state-level assistance (see Figure 3). Some states have additional EOCs for coordinating information and resources within a region or area.



**Figure 3: State and Local Response Structure**

Many states involve their tribal counterparts within the EOC to ensure that tribal coordinating structures are integrated into the delivery of capabilities and tribal needs are addressed.

### **Federal Response Operational Structures**

When an incident occurs that exceeds, or is anticipated to exceed, local or state resources—or when an incident is managed by Federal departments or agencies acting under their own authorities—the Federal Government may use the management structures described within the NRF. Additionally, the Federal Government may use supplementary or complementary plans to involve all necessary department and agency resources to organize the Federal response and ensure coordination among all response partners.

All Federal departments and agencies may play significant roles in response activities depending on the nature and size of an incident. Many of the arrangements by which departments and agencies participate are defined in the ESF Annexes, coordinated through pre-scripted mission assignments in a Stafford Act response, formalized in interagency agreements, or described in NRF supplementary plans.

The following sections describe Federal support operations at the incident, regional, and headquarters levels.

### **Federal Incident-level Operations**

To help deliver Federal support or response at the incident level, coordinating structures are aligned to incident-level structures.

### ***Unified Coordination***

Unified Coordination is the term used to describe the primary state/tribal/Federal incident management activities conducted at the incident level. Unified Coordination is typically directed from a Joint Field Office (JFO), a temporary Federal facility that provides a central location for coordination of response efforts by the private sector, NGOs, and all levels of government. Unified Coordination is organized, staffed, and managed in a manner consistent with NIMS principles using an ICS structure. The Unified Coordination Group (UCG) is composed of senior leaders representing state, tribal, and Federal interests and, in certain circumstances, local jurisdictions and the private sector. UCG members must have significant jurisdictional responsibility and authority. The composition of the UCG varies from incident to incident depending on the scope and nature of the disaster. The UCG leads the unified coordination staff. Personnel from state, tribal, and Federal departments and agencies, other jurisdictional entities, the private sector, and NGOs may be assigned to the unified coordination staff at various incident facilities (e.g., JFO, staging areas, and other field offices). The UCG determines staffing of the unified coordination staff based on incident requirements.

Although Unified Coordination is based on the ICS structure, it does not manage on-scene operations. Instead, it focuses on providing support to on-scene response efforts and conducting broader support operations that may extend beyond the incident site. Unified Coordination must include robust operations, planning, public information, and logistics capabilities that integrate local, state, and Federal—as well as tribal, territorial, and insular area governments—personnel when appropriate, so that all levels of government work together to achieve unity of effort.

When incidents affect multiple localities and states or the entire Nation, multiple UCGs with associated unified coordination staff may be established. In these situations, coordination occurs according to the principles of area command as described in NIMS.

As the primary field entity for Federal response, Unified Coordination integrates diverse Federal authorities and capabilities and coordinates Federal response and recovery operations. Figure 4 depicts a Unified Coordination organization that might be assembled to deal with a major incident, such as a terrorist attack, that includes a law enforcement dimension. Federal agencies that conduct on-scene, tactical-level activities may also establish incident and area command structures, generally in conjunction with their counterpart local, state, tribal, territorial and/or insular area government agencies, to manage that work.



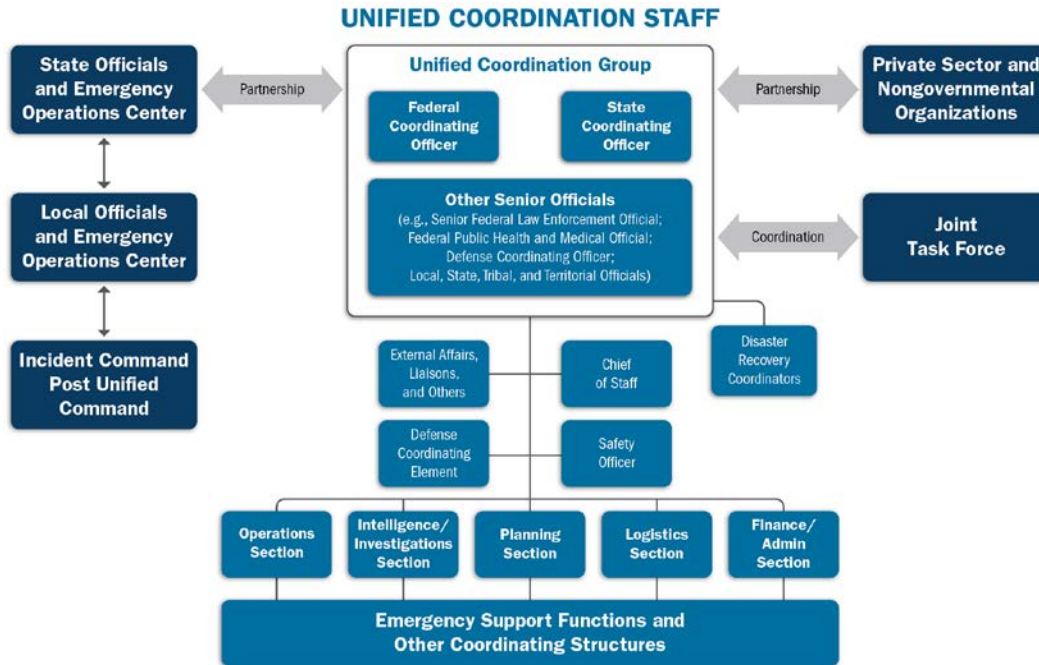


Figure 4: Unified Coordination

### Federal Incident-level Operations for Non-Stafford Act Incidents

For non-Stafford Act incidents, the department or agency with primary legal jurisdiction activates the response structures appropriate to its authorities; these structures are generally organized based on NIMS concepts and principles. When coordinating according to Presidential directive, the Secretary of Homeland Security coordinates with the head of the department or agency with primary legal jurisdiction but retains the authority to activate the additional response structures the Secretary determines appropriate. In non-Stafford Act incidents, Federal agencies who have responsibility for on-scene, tactical-level operations may establish incident command and area command structures, or coordinate with state, tribal and local agencies to form unified incident command and unified area command structures.

### Federal Regional Operational Support

Coordinating structures can be assembled and organized at the regional level to address incidents that cross state borders or have broad geographic or system-wide implications or to manage competing requirements for response assets among multiple incidents.

#### *Federal Regional Facilities*

Most Federal departments and agencies have regional or field offices that may participate with state and local governments in planning for incidents and provide response assets when an incident occurs in their jurisdiction. Some Federal departments and agencies share the same standard Federal regional structure as FEMA. In larger-scale incidents, these regional and field offices may provide the initial response assets with additional support being provided from other department and agency offices across the Nation. Some Federal regional and field offices have their own EOCs to support deployments of their assets.

- **FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC).** FEMA has 10 regional offices, each headed by a Regional Administrator. Each of FEMA's regional offices maintains an RRCC.

When activated, RRCCs are multi-agency coordination centers generally staffed by ESFs in anticipation of or immediately following an incident. Operating under the direction of the FEMA Regional Administrator, the staff within the RRCCs coordinates Federal regional response efforts and maintains connectivity with FEMA Headquarters and with state EOCs, state and major urban area fusion centers, Federal Executive Boards, Tribal governments and other Federal, tribal, and state operations and coordination centers that potentially contribute to the development of situational awareness. The UCG assumes responsibility for coordinating Federal response activities at the incident level once Unified Coordination is established, freeing the RRCC to deal with new incidents should they occur.

## **Federal Headquarters Operational Support**

Coordinating structures are assembled and organized at the headquarters level, particularly to address incidents that cross regional borders or have broad geographic or system-wide implications.

### ***Federal Operations Centers***

Most Cabinet-level departments and agencies have at least one headquarters-level operations center. A wide range of such centers maintain situational awareness within their functional areas and provide relevant information to the DHS National Operations Center (NOC)<sup>35</sup> during an incident. These operations centers may also coordinate ESF activities, communicate with other Federal operations centers, and communicate with their local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area government counterparts. Examples of Federal Operations Centers include:

- **National Operations Center (NOC).** In the event of an act of terrorism, natural disaster, or other emergency, the National Operations Center (NOC),<sup>36</sup> as the principal operations center for the Department of Homeland Security, coordinates and integrates information from NOC components to provide situational awareness and a common operating picture for the entire Federal Government, as well as for local, tribal, and state governments, as appropriate, to ensure that accurate and critical terrorism and disaster-related information reaches government decision makers in a timely manner. Additionally, the NOC serves as the national fusion center, collecting and synthesizing all-source information, including information from state and major urban area fusion centers, for all threats and hazards across the entire integrated national preparedness system.
- **National Response Coordination Center (NRCC).** When activated, the NRCC is a multiagency coordination center located at FEMA Headquarters. Its staff coordinates the overall Federal support for major disasters and emergencies, including catastrophic incidents and emergency management program implementation. FEMA maintains the NRCC as a functional component of the NOC for incident support operations.
- **National Military Command Center (NMCC).** DOD's NMCC is the Nation's focal point for continuous monitoring and coordination of worldwide military operations. It directly supports combatant commanders, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President in the command of U.S. Armed Forces in peacetime contingencies and war. The NMCC participates in a wide variety of activities, ranging from missile warning and attack assessment to management of peacetime operations such as Defense Support of Civil Authorities during national emergencies.

---

<sup>35</sup> The NOC is composed of the NOC Watch, Intelligence Watch, FEMA National Watch Center, and National Response Coordination Center, and the National Infrastructure Coordination Center.

- **Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC).** The SIOC acts as the FBI's worldwide EOC. The SIOC maintains situational awareness of criminal or terrorist threats, critical incidents and crises, both foreign and domestic, regardless of cause or origin, and provides FBI headquarters executives, domestic field offices, and overseas legal attachés with timely notification and the dissemination of strategic information. The SIOC shares information and intelligence with other EOCs at all levels of government. Maintaining a constant state of readiness to support any crisis or major event, the SIOC provides a secure venue to support crisis management, special event monitoring, and significant operations. It provides command, control, communications connectivity, and a common operating picture for managing FBI operational responses and assets anywhere in the world on behalf of FBI Headquarters divisions, field offices, and legal attachés. In the event of a crisis, the SIOC establishes the headquarters command post and develops connectivity to field command posts and Joint Operations Centers.
- **Joint Operations Center (JOC).** In response to significant threats or incidents involving Federal crimes under the criminal jurisdiction of the United States, the FBI may establish a JOC, a regional multijurisdictional interagency investigative, intelligence, and operations center to lead and coordinate the law enforcement response, investigative operations and related intelligence activities. The JOC is led by an FBI On-Scene Commander and is supported by a federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal Command Group and a Consequence Management Group, as appropriate. The JOC is the place from which the FBI leads and coordinates the law enforcement operational response, on-scene law enforcement, and related investigative and intelligence activities. In response to terrorist threats, FBI will establish a Joint Operations Center for the purpose of managing the investigation and coordinating the law enforcement response to resolve terrorist threats or incidents. If the threat involves potential attacks in or threats spanning multiple geographic areas, then multiple JOCs may be established. The JOC is established by the FBI under the operational control of the Operations Section Chief (OSC), and acts as the focal point for the strategic management and direction of on-site activities, identification of State and local requirements and priorities, and coordination of the Federal counterterrorism response. Additionally, the JOC will be augmented by outside agencies, including representatives from the Domestic Emergency Support Team (DEST) (if deployed), who provide interagency technical expertise. The JOC is established to ensure inter-incident coordination and to organize multiple agencies and jurisdictions within an overall command and coordination structure. Representation within the JOC includes officials from local, State and Federal agencies with specific roles in counterterrorism and consequence management.

The specific structures that are activated for any given incident depend on the levels of government involved, as well as the legal authorities under which the response is being conducted.

## *Integration*

Effective emergency response requires the ability for the response coordinating structures to link to and share information with the coordinating structures in the other mission areas. For example, in the wake of a terrorist attack that results in the need for a coordinated Federal response, Response mission area coordinating structures must work closely with those in the Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, and Recovery mission areas. Effective mitigation efforts directly reduce the required scale of response operations. Prevention and protection activities continue after an attack to prevent and protect from follow-on attacks. This requires close coordination of prevention and protection activities with response and recovery efforts. Integration of response mission activities with protection efforts may also occur in the context of a credible threat. Following determination of such a threat, Protection mission area organizations may switch to an enhanced steady-state posture. At

that time, Response mission area assets may need to be positioned to respond quickly should protection, mitigation, and prevention efforts fail. Establishing close working relationships, lines of communication, and coordination protocols between protection, prevention, response, and recovery organizations facilitate this process.

Examples of Response mission area coordinating structures cooperating with other mission area assets include:

- Coordinating with Prevention and Protection mission area structures to share information.
- Coordinating with Protection mission area structures in the wake of an incident to ensure that communities and emergency responders have the protection needed to perform their jobs.
- Coordinating anticipatory Response mission area activities with the Mitigation and Recovery mission activities. Although they are generally considered to be prevention or protection focused organizations, the various state and major urban area fusion centers are examples of coordinating structures whose utility spans mission areas. The collection, analysis, and dissemination of information by the fusion centers can inform response activities through information sharing and operational coordination efforts.

Because of the natural relationship between response and recovery efforts and the fact that response and recovery activities often occur simultaneously, the responsibilities of some ESFs correspond with or transition to the responsibilities of Recovery Support Functions (RSF), the Recovery mission area coordinating structures defined in the National Disaster Recovery Framework. The RSFs frequently build on the ESF capabilities and short-term recovery efforts applied by the ESFs to meet basic human needs to integrate short-term recovery efforts with intermediate and long-term recovery needs. The relationships and integration between the ESFs and the coordinating structures of other mission areas are detailed in the FIOPs.

### ***Science and Technology***

Science and technology (S&T) capabilities and investments are essential for enabling the delivery and continuous improvement of National Preparedness. The whole community should design, conduct, and improve operations based on the best, most rigorous scientific data, methods, and science-based understandings available. Commitments and investments that ensure global leadership in science and technology will yield leading-edge technology and scientific understanding to guide National Preparedness actions. In addition, coordination across the whole community, including scientific researchers, will ensure that scientific efforts are relevant to National Preparedness.

Science and technology-based capabilities and assets are essential to the response mission area. When natural disasters strike, leading edge scientific assets are deployed via satellite and aerial platforms to provide fast, high resolution information about conditions on the ground. When technological accidents occur, such as chemical spills or releases, embedded or rapidly deployed scientific and technological experts employ the most relevant, best-available scientific analyses and assessment methods to diagnose conditions and protect public health and safety. Effective decision making in a rapidly changing disaster situation requires timely and relevant information for situational awareness and technologies that enable communication across platforms and teams. Further, integrating science and technology breakthroughs into emergency response teams' tools and training ensures the most up-to-date and effective treatment of victims.

Ensuring long-term S&T investments to advance the ability to respond to ever-evolving hazards, and sustaining a healthy science and technology workforce, supports the response mission area core

capabilities for years into the future. Coordination between those with response mission responsibilities and U.S. science and technology communities and institutions will be necessary to ensure that scientific efforts, education, and investments are relevant to response.

## Relationship to Other Mission Areas

All five mission areas integrate with each other through interdependencies, shared assets, and overlapping objectives. These overlapping areas are identified through comprehensive planning with the whole community to ensure that they are addressed during response to an incident.

The Response mission area integrates with the other four mission areas in the following manner:

- **Prevention.** Response organizations coordinate with those responsible for preventing imminent acts of terrorism to understand potential and specific threats and to prepare accordingly by planning for general threats and through crisis action planning for credible threats. Response mission area capabilities must be available in case efforts to prevent terrorist attacks fail or credible threats are identified. Coordinating with prevention officials aids response officials in understanding the extraordinary response capabilities that terrorist attacks may require. When response activities are occurring, whether due to a terrorist attack or another type of incident, prevention activities continue.
- **Protection.** Efforts to protect people and communities, as well as vital facilities, systems, and resources, are inextricably linked to response efforts. Responders that support the Protection and Recovery mission areas include many of the same people and organizations. Protection activities occur before, during, and after incidents. In the aftermath of an incident, a physically secure environment should be established before Response mission area organizations can deliver essential response capabilities.
- **Mitigation.** Reducing risk through hazard mitigation reduces requirements for response capabilities. Mitigation organizations often have special insight into risks and hazards that can be shared with response personnel to improve response planning and execution.
- **Recovery.** Communities should build recovery plans before an incident occurs. After an incident, recovery efforts must begin as soon as possible, often while response capabilities are still being applied.

## Operational Planning

Planning across the full range of homeland security operations is an inherent responsibility of every level of government. This NRF fosters unity of effort for emergency operations planning by providing common doctrine and purpose.

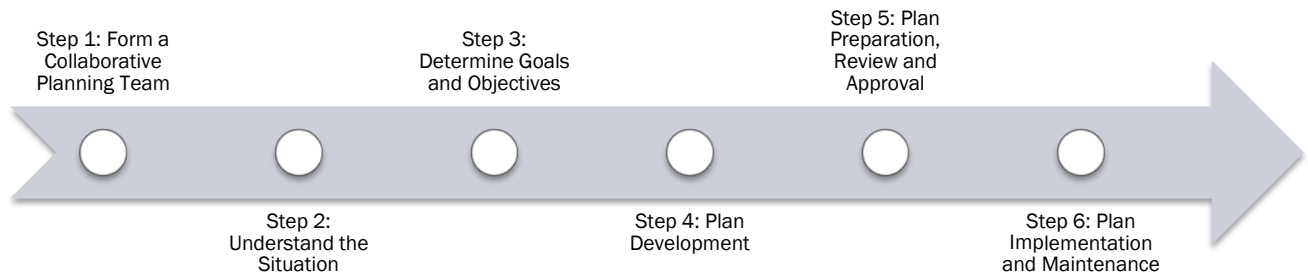
A plan is a continuous, evolving instrument of anticipated actions that maximizes opportunities and guides response operations. Since planning is an ongoing process, a plan is a product based on information and understanding at the moment and is subject to revision.

Operational planning is conducted across the whole community, including the private sector, NGOs, and all levels of government. Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101 provides further information on the various types of plans and guidance on the fundamentals of planning.

From the Federal perspective, integrated planning helps explain how Federal departments and agencies and other national-level whole community partners provide the right resources at the right time to support local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area government response operations. From

their perspectives, integrated planning provides answers to questions about which traditional and non-traditional partners can provide the necessary resources.

Federal plans for incidents are developed using a six-step process, as shown below, in alignment with the steps described in CPG 101.

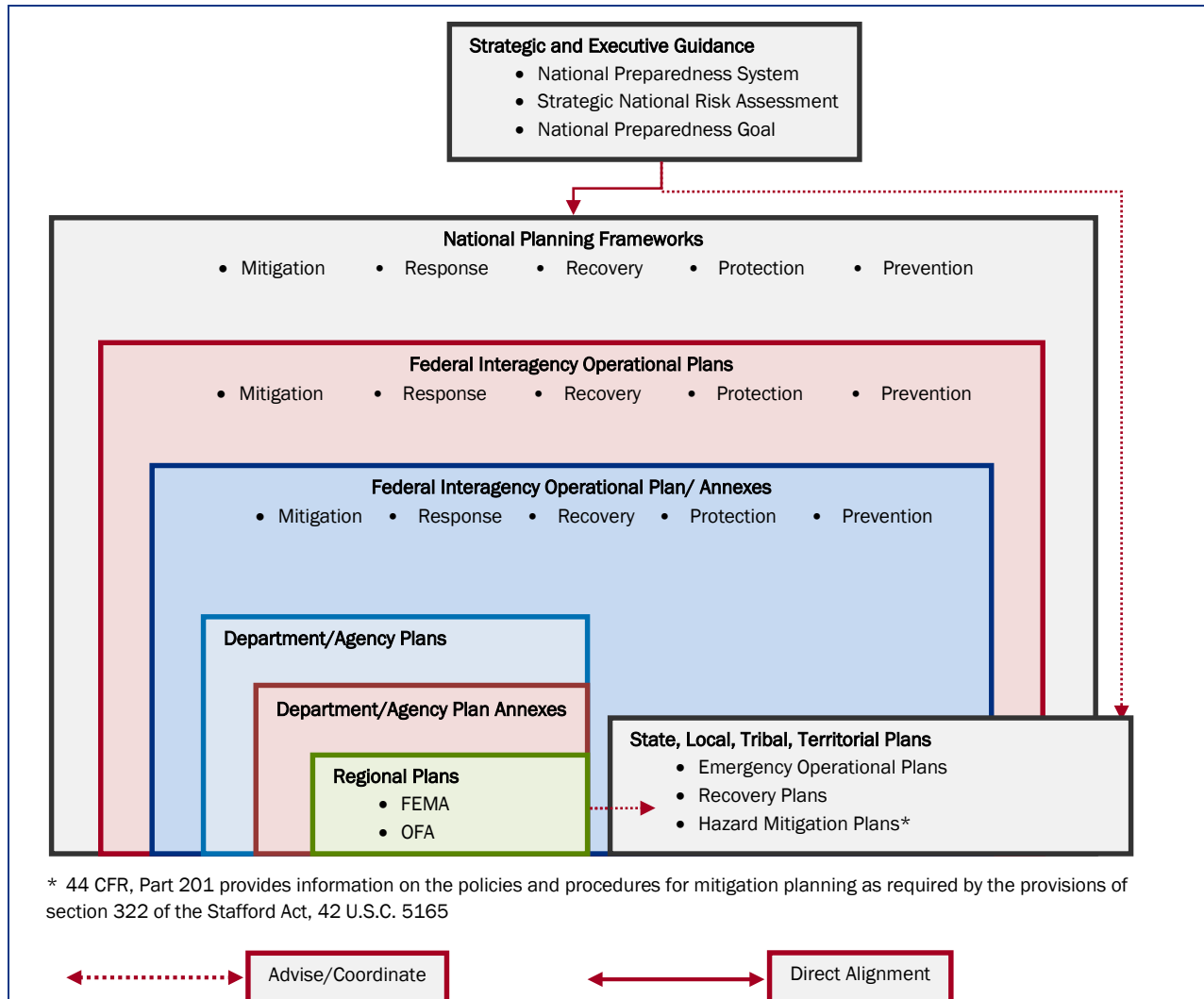


**Figure 5: The Six-Step Planning Process**

The following section outlines how operational planning is applied within the Response mission area and provides guidance for the development of the Response FIOP.

### *Response Operational Planning*

Figure 6 below provides an overview of how Federal incident operational planning efforts are aligned under the National Preparedness System and are mutually supportive in their development, coordination, and use.



**Figure 6: Alignment of Planning Efforts with PPD 8 – National Preparedness**

## Federal Planning

At the Federal level, the NRF is supported by the Response FIOP for all hazards. Incident Annexes to the FIOP address unique concepts of operations or capabilities for risks that are not otherwise addressed by the FIOP. The concepts in the NRF and NIMS guide Federal operational response planning the Response FIOP, which provides further information regarding roles and responsibilities, identifies the critical tasks an entity takes in executing core capabilities, and identifies resourcing and sourcing requirements.

The Response FIOP further defines the concepts, principles, structures, and actions introduced in this Framework with a specific focus on these elements at the Federal level. It addresses interdependencies and integration with the other mission areas throughout the plan's concept of operations. It also describes the management of concurrent actions and coordination points with the areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, and recovery.

The Response FIOP takes an all-hazards approach to preparedness, highlights key areas of interoperability across the five mission areas, and addresses the whole community to optimize resources. The concept of operations in the Response FIOP is based on a no-notice catastrophic

incident that spans multiple regions and states and assumes hundreds of thousands of casualties, severe damage to critical infrastructure, and limited ingress and egress due to massive damage to transportation systems. Such an incident would have significant ramifications on the political, economic, social, environmental, logistical, technical, legal, and administrative structures and would overwhelm local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area government response capabilities.

While the planning factors used for the Response FIOP suggest an incident that will result in a Stafford Act declaration, the plan also addresses the responsibility of certain Federal departments and agencies to lead elements of a response under their own authorities in response to a non-Stafford Act incident.

The Response FIOP contains:

- A detailed concept of operations.
- A description of critical tasks and responsibilities.
- Detailed resourcing, personnel, and sourcing requirements.
- Specific provisions for the rapid integration of resources and personnel to incidents caused by any of the hazards/threats to which the whole community is particularly vulnerable.
- Functional and incident-specific annexes as necessary.

It does not contain detailed descriptions of specific department or agency functions as such information is located in department- or agency-level operational plans.

The NRF is based on the concept of tiered response with an understanding that most incidents start at the local and tribal level, and as needs exceed resources and capabilities, additional local, state, tribal, and Federal assets are applied. The Response FIOP, therefore, is intended to align with other local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area government, and Federal plans to ensure that all response partners share a common operational focus. Similarly, integration occurs at the Federal level among the departments, agencies, and nongovernmental partners that compose the respective mission area through the frameworks, FIOPs, and departmental and agency operations plans.

In developing the Response FIOP, the following planning needs are taken into account:

- Food and water.
- Physically accessible evacuation and sheltering.
- Accessible transportation.
- Medical surge, medical countermeasures, and treatment capability.
- General and medical supplies that include, but are not limited to, durable medical equipment, consumable medical supplies, accessible cots, and services such as personal assistance services.
- Emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs.
- Reunification and safety of unaccompanied minors.
- Guardianship.
- All communication efforts are distributed at the same time and are provided in multiple formats to account for the access and functional needs of individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, individuals with cognitive limitations, and individuals who do not use traditional media.



- Animal emergency management needs.

### *Planning Assumptions*

The detailed planning factors for the Response FIOP focus on the impacts associated with a large-scale emergency or disaster that could occur anywhere within the United States, its territories, or insular area governments and results in a substantial number of fatalities and injuries, widespread property loss, and disruption of essential services across a large geographic area. Such an occurrence has significant ramifications on the political, economic, social, environmental, logistical, technical, legal, and administrative structures within the impacted area and may overwhelm governmental response capabilities.

The plan addresses the potential, unique requirements and needs of all members of the whole community. While the Response FIOP contains assumptions for each of the response core capabilities, some of the overarching assumptions include the following:

- Multiple catastrophic incidents or attacks will occur with little or no warning.
- Incidents are typically managed at the lowest possible geographic, organizational, and jurisdictional level.
- Incident management activities will be initiated and conducted using the principles contained in NIMS.
- The combined expertise and capabilities of government at all levels, the private sector, and NGOs will be required to respond to a catastrophic incident.

### *Framework Application*

Implementation of the concepts within the NRF and Response FIOP is mandatory for Federal departments and agencies. While the NRF does not direct the actions of other response elements, the guidance contained in the NRF and the Response FIOP is intended to inform local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, as well as NGOs and the private sector, regarding how the Federal Government responds to incidents. These partners can use this information to inform their planning and ensure that assumptions regarding Federal assistance and response and the manner in which Federal support will be provided are accurate.

## **Supporting Resources**

To assist NRF users, FEMA will maintain an online repository that contains electronic versions of the current NRF documents—base document, ESF annexes, and support annexes—as well as other supporting materials. This Resource Center will provide information, training materials, and other tools, such as an overview of the main Stafford Act provisions, a guide to authorities and references, and an abbreviation list to assist response partners in understanding and executing their roles under the NRF.

Resource Center materials will be regularly evaluated, updated, and augmented as necessary. Additional content may be added or modified at the request of Response mission area partners and other users.

## Conclusion

---

The environment in which the Nation operates grows ever more complex and unpredictable. In implementing the NRF to build national preparedness, partners are encouraged to develop a shared understanding of broad-level strategic implications as they make critical decisions in building future capacity and capability. The whole community should be engaged in examining and implementing the strategy and doctrine contained in this Framework, considering both current and future requirements in the process. This means that this Framework is a living document, and it will be regularly reviewed to evaluate consistency with existing and new policies, evolving conditions, and the experience gained from its use. Reviews will be conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Framework on a quadrennial basis.

DHS will coordinate and oversee the review and maintenance process for the NRF. The revision process includes developing or updating any documents necessary to carry out capabilities. Significant updates to the Framework will be vetted through a Federal senior-level interagency review process. This Framework will be reviewed in order to accomplish the following:

- Assess and update information on the core capabilities in support of Response goals and objectives.
- Ensure that it adequately reflects the organization of responsible entities.
- Ensure that it is consistent with the other four mission areas.
- Update processes based on changes in the national threat/hazard environment.
- Incorporate lessons learned and effective practices from day-to-day operations, exercises, and actual incidents and alerts.
- Reflect progress in the Nation's Response mission activities, the need to execute new laws, executive orders, and Presidential directives, as well as strategic changes to national priorities and guidance, critical tasks, or national capabilities.

The implementation and review of this Framework will consider effective practices and lessons learned from exercises and operations, as well as pertinent new processes and technologies. Effective practices include continuity planning, which ensures that the capabilities contained in this Framework can continue to be executed regardless of the threat or hazard. Pertinent new processes and technologies should enable the Nation to adapt efficiently to the evolving risk environment and use data relating to location, context, and interdependencies that allow for effective integration across all missions using a standards-based approach. Updates to the NRF Annexes may occur independently from reviews of the base document.

America's security and resilience work is never finished. While the Nation is safer, stronger, and better prepared than it was a decade ago, the commitment to safeguard the Nation against its greatest risks, now and for decades to come, remains resolute. By bringing the whole community together now to address future needs, the Nation will continue to improve its preparedness to face whatever challenges unfold.