



## Executive Summary

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit association representing local governments in the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's members are the elected officials from a number of local governments in the National Capital Region (NCR), plus area delegation members from the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives.

This plan applies to the NCR, which is defined as the District of Columbia, including the Supreme Court and the United States Capitol; Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties in Virginia; and all cities existing in Maryland or Virginia within the geographic area designated by the outer boundaries of the combined counties listed in United States Code [40 USC 71 (b)]. For the purposes of this plan, the term **region** is expanded to include Frederick County in Maryland, and thus includes all COG member jurisdictions.

COG provides a focus for action and develops sound regional responses to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, human services, population growth, public safety, and transportation. The events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent anthrax attacks in the Washington area, highlighted the need for a regional coordination plan containing new policies, protocols, and procedures to improve coordination and communication in anticipation of potential future regional emergencies. This Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) has been developed to facilitate coordination and communication for regional incidents or regional planned events.

### Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the RECP is to provide a structure where the NCR can collaborate on planning, communication, information sharing and coordination activities before, during, and after a regional emergency. The scope of the plan is deliberately broad, including the activities and capabilities of all organizations, government, and business that might have a role in anticipating or responding to major threats or hazards in the region. The plan is scalable, allowing for an appropriate level of coordination and information exchange to deal with a regional emergency.

### Organization of the RECP

The RECP design is based on the functional structure of the National Response Framework and the Federal Emergency Management Agencies Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101, and also ties into the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The first section is the Base Plan. The Base Plan covers the purpose, scope, roles and relationships among member organizations as they relate to regional communication, coordination, and information sharing. The centerpiece of this planning effort has been the creation of the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS) and the Regional Incident Tracking System (WebEOC). The Plan also describes how the RICCS will facilitate the process of regional communication, coordination and regional information sharing.

To facilitate this process, the regional Emergency Support Functions (ESF) that may be needed during a regional emergency have been identified. These Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs) will allow for the channeling of the large amount of information gathered in a regional emergency into discrete, definable areas with common terminology for jurisdictions to share information with others in the region. In addition to the Base Plan and R-ESFs, the RECP also contains supporting annexes and appendices.



## **Content of the RECP**

The RECP is a tool to assist local, state, federal, and private sector partners in coordinating their response to regional incidents and planned events. The RECP will not usurp or infringe on the authorities, plans, or procedures of any participating jurisdiction, agency, or organization. All necessary decisions affecting response, recovery, protective actions, public health and safety advisories, etc., will be made by responsible officials under their existing authorities, policies, plans, and procedures.

Establishing common terminology and structuring the plan for compatibility with accepted local, state, and federal emergency plans improve efficiency and effectiveness in regional communications and coordination. Emergency response decisions will be enhanced by the availability of timely and accurate information. The RECP will focus on regional communication, to provide this timely and accurate information that facilitates regional coordination.

## **Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS)**

The RICCS provides a system for COG members, the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the federal government, public agencies, the private sector non-governmental organizations, and schools and universities to collaborate in planning, communication, information sharing, and coordination activities before, during, and after a regional incident or regional emergency. RICCS was originally defined as three different subsystems: instant text messaging technology; reserved phone numbers for regional conference calls; and an incident tracking tool. Popular terminology has evolved since 2002 to refer to the COG-owned text messaging tool as "RICCS", regional teleconferencing as a "RICCS Call", and "WebEOC" as a separate incident tracking system. For the purposes of this document, RICCS will refer to the text messaging and conference call capabilities.

Based on the threat level, local, state, and federal agencies will implement appropriate protective measures. The RICCS is a tool to facilitate sharing information regionally about what protective measures have been taken. The RICCS is a virtual system with multiple capabilities that was designed to facilitate regional communication. Each jurisdiction authorizes certain individuals to be on the RICCS text messaging list. Those individuals receive RICCS alerts and take appropriate action. Participating organizations will employ multiple means of communication, including conference calling, WebEOC, and wireless communication systems. The Washington Area Warning and Alert System (WAWAS) is a private telephone system also used by area operations centers to share emergency information.

The RICCS is not intended to supersede, replace, or duplicate the existing communications and information sharing that routinely occurs among federal, state, and local emergency management organizations. Rather, it is intended to focus on information and coordination from a regional perspective.

## **Concurrent Implementation**

The RECP will be implemented only at the call of its participants, and can be applied before, during, or after a regional incident or regional emergency concurrently with other local, state, and federal plans. Operational authority will remain with the jurisdictions and appropriate operational authority will remain within state and Federal control.

## **Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESF)**

An R-ESF is a basic function shared by all jurisdictions. The R-ESF structure of the RECP parallels the ESF structure of the National Response Framework (NRF) and the District of Columbia District Response Plan (DRP). Individual R-ESFs identify organizations with resources and capabilities for a particular type of assistance or requirement frequently needed in a large-scale emergency or disaster. Each of the R-ESFs use the same format to identify participant organizations, establish basic policies and planning assumptions that will guide activities, and explain how they will communicate and coordinate with



each other and with other regional partners. A short synopsis of the content of each R-ESF to be used before, during, and after a regional incident or planned event follows:

**R-ESF #1: Transportation**—facilitates communication and coordination among regional jurisdictions and agencies concerning regional transportation issues and activities before, during, and after a regional incident or emergency.

**R-ESF #2: Communications**—ensures the coordination and communication of information concerning hardware and capacity for interoperability.

**R-ESF #3: Public Works and Engineering**—ensures an effective and timely response to regional public emergencies concerning regional water supply (including potable water and ice), wastewater (including wastewater treatment), and solid waste and debris management.

**R-ESF #4: Firefighting**— facilitates communication and coordination among regional jurisdictions concerning regional firefighting and EMS, technical rescue, and hazardous materials operations issues and activities.

\* Note: Within the NCR, R-ESFs #4, #9, and #10 are structurally the same and are all contained in R-ESF #4.

**R-ESF #5: Emergency Management**—coordinates responses to large scale emergencies and disasters, manages emergency operations centers and facilitates the collection, processing, and dissemination of information among regional jurisdictions and organizations. This function enhances substantive regional dialogue and communication by facilitating information sharing with all of the R-ESFs, and others as necessary, in an integrated and coordinated manner.

**R-ESF #6: Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services**—promotes and ensures a coordinated regional capability to provide mass care assistance to victims that have been impacted by a regional incident or regional emergency, including a weapons of mass destruction event.

**R-ESF #7: Logistics Management and Resource Support**—facilitates communication and support among regional jurisdictions to assist in the effective and timely coordination of resources following an emergency.

**R-ESF #8: Public Health and Medical Services**—facilitates communication, cooperation, and coordination among local and state jurisdictions and a vast array of hospitals, social workers, and private-practice physicians concerning regional health, mental health, and medical services issues and activities.

**R-ESF #9: Search and Rescue**—See R-ESF #4.

**R-ESF #10: Oil and Hazardous Materials Response**— See R-ESF #4.

**R-ESF #11: Agriculture and Natural Resources**—facilitates the procurement, storage, transportation, and distribution of food provisions and food stamps and also feeding assistance. R-ESF #11 works in conjunction with and in continuance of the mass-feeding activities performed under R-ESF #6: Mass Care.

**R-ESF # 12: Energy**—ensures an effective and timely response to public emergencies that affect the regional energy infrastructure (including the supply and delivery of electricity, natural gas, and petroleum fuels).

**R-ESF #13: Public Safety and Security**—facilitates communication and information coordination among regional jurisdictions concerning law enforcement issues and activities.



## R-ESF #14: Long Term Community Recovery

**R-ESF #15: External Affairs**—provides accurate, authoritative, and timely regional information to news media representatives, thereby supporting other regional partners as they work to protect the health and safety of citizens.

**R-ESF #16: Volunteer and Donations Management**—facilitates the communications and coordination among regional jurisdictions and agencies regarding the need for and availability of donations and volunteer services.

## Support Annexes

To augment the Base Plan, Support Annexes provide detailed information on specific topics. The Support Annexes include descriptive briefs on the following:

1. **Animal Protection**—lists governmental, private sector, and nongovernmental agencies involved; the need and purpose for this function; the situations and conditions for this function; the planning assumptions, the coordination capability; and the responsibilities of the participant organizations.
2. **Business Continuity**—identifies impact of potential loss of services in the event of a regional incident or regional emergency; formulates and implements viable recovery strategies; develops recovery plan(s) to ensure continuity of organizational services; and administers a comprehensive training, testing, and maintenance program.
3. **Credentialing**—provides overview of actions taken to date regarding credentialing protocols within the NCR to ensure proper access to an incident or emergency site by authorized individuals.
4. **Disease Surveillance**—discusses governmental and private sector health organizations; purposes and policies; description of the situation, including regional emergency conditions and planning assumptions; concept of coordination; responsibilities of the participating and supporting agencies; the preparedness cycle; and an analysis of legal issues and recommended action.
5. **Economic Recovery**—provides additional communication and coordination mechanisms that may be applied when the impact of an emergency requires a coordinated effort among member jurisdictions and other stakeholders for regional economic recovery.
6. **Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination Annex**— addresses transportation aspects of moving people out of affected areas of the region and moving required resources into affected areas in anticipation of, and following a regional incident or regional emergency that requires large-scale evacuation.
7. **Strategic National Stockpile**—lists local governmental and private sector health organizations in the region; the purpose and scope of the stockpile; policies, regional situation, including emergency conditions and planning assumptions; concept of coordination; responsibilities of the participating and supporting agencies; and the preparedness cycle.
8. **Solid Waste and Debris Management**—addresses detailed issues including staging areas; mutual aid agreements; review of available resources; review of contracts already in place; requirements of regulatory



agencies; monitoring data; contamination implications (i.e., biomedical, radioactive, and identifying locations/facilities that can accept contaminated waste); and disposal infrastructure/waste stream capacity and who controls that capacity.

9. **Protective Actions**—identifies steps taken to preserve the health and safety of emergency responders and the public during a public emergency and provides a framework under which the COG jurisdictions can coordinate their decisions.
10. **Terrorism**—addresses the unique communication and coordination aspects of dealing with a terrorist act and the crisis and consequence management relationships involved.
11. **Water Supply Emergency Plan**—describes the 2002 Water Supply Emergency Plan and how it would affect communication and coordination regarding water supply in the event of a regional incident or regional emergency.

## Appendices

In addition, Appendices provide detailed information on the following:

- A. **Definitions and Acronyms**—a listing of the terms and organizations referenced in the RECP. Definitions are provided for unfamiliar terms and full organizational names as well as acronyms are listed.
- B. **Catalog of Agreements**—a listing of mutual aid agreements developed among COG's member jurisdictions. Includes agreements related to public safety, fire/rescue, energy, transportation, weather, emergency alert system, water, and health.
- C. **Authorities**—a listing of the various authorities providing the legal basis for the RECP. They are categorized as follows: Federal, Presidential Decision Directives, Homeland Security Presidential Directives, District of Columbia Codes Related to Emergency Planning and Operations, Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws, and Maryland Authorities.
- D. **References**—include citations and web site addresses, when available, for the various plans and organizations pertinent to the contents of the RECP.
- E. **Liability and Indemnification**—includes key elements of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, and the Emergency Management Association Compact, which is an interstate mutual aid agreement that allows states to assist one another in responding to emergencies and disasters.
- F. **Coordinating Agency Matrices** – includes a matrix of local, state, federal, and other supporting organizations and the R-ESFs that they support.
- G. **Preparedness Cycle** – includes a process for reviewing and updating the RECP that includes the phases outlined in each individual R-ESF: Planning, Training, Exercises, Evaluation, and Corrective Action.



## Regional Emergency Coordination Plan Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Development and Maintenance of a RECP for the NCR and for Utilization of the RICCS

**WHEREAS**, in response to the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, the COG Board of Directors ("COG Board") convened a Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for the NCR ("Task Force"), consisting of representatives from the local, state, federal governments, public sector agencies, and private and non-profit sector stakeholders; and

**WHEREAS**, federal, state and local governments and other public and private sector stakeholders agree that the region must have a coordinated homeland defense and security program with the capacity to respond with dispatch to the full spectrum of regional emergencies, including natural disasters, human-induced hazards, and terrorism; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 10, 2002, the COG Board approved the Task Force's RECP Framework as the interim RECP, and committed to adopt the full RECP by September 2002; and

**WHEREAS**, the RECP must be a living and evolving document, that will be strengthened and enhanced over time as it is exercised and tested; and

**NOW THEREFORE**, the signatory parties to this MOU hereby agree to the following:

- To use the RECP agreed to by the COG Board of Directors on September 11, 2002, in the event of a regional emergency.
- To appoint representative(s) to participate in the emergency support work groups of the RECP under the auspices of the COG Task Force or successor organization. The appointees to the Task Force work groups shall be senior individuals having policy or technical knowledge required for further plan development.
- To cooperatively maintain, through the Task Force (or successor organization) and its work groups, a comprehensive RECP, and update supporting annexes as required for implementing the Plan.
- To incorporate the RICCS into agency/organization emergency response procedures to facilitate communication and coordination of the region's response to regional emergencies.
- To cooperatively participate in exercises and drills to test and validate the Plan on a regular basis.

This MOU may be modified at any time with the written consent of authorized representatives of each signatory organization. Any signatory organization to this MOU may withdraw from it by providing COG a seven-day written notice of such action.

The MOU shall become effective immediately when it is executed by at least two participating jurisdictions each in Maryland and Virginia, and by the District of Columbia.





## Signatories

Signatories to the Metropolitan Washington RECP MOU include:

- The Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) of the COG member jurisdictions
- The COG Board of Directors
- The State Governors and/or State Emergency Management Director
- Federal agencies
- Private sector organizations
- Regional operating agencies

## Plan Development and Maintenance

On April 10, 2002, the Board acknowledged that the RECP must be a living and evolving document that will be strengthened and enhanced over time as it is exercised and tested. The NCR Emergency Preparedness Council is charged with the oversight and implementation of the RECP; coordination of activities of the various R-ESF Working Groups as they develop specific procedures and relationships; oversight over development of annexes and establishment of additional annexes as may be desirable; and development of training or tests of various components of regional emergency preparedness in conjunction with COG's Chief Administrative Officers Committee.

As is true for the planning efforts of its member jurisdictions, COG will revise and refine the plan on a regular basis. Further, COG will initiate training and exercise programs to test and improve the basic plan. The RECP will be a constant work-in-progress. Each revision will be numbered and documented. As new versions are created and distributed to the participants, older versions will be replaced. This will assure that all users are working off of the same version of the plan. The table below will keep a record of revisions made to the plan since it was first published.

### Record of Changes

Change Number	Date of Change	Section of Plan Changed	Recorded by
1 (Revision)	2010	Base plan, RESF sections	EPC approved, 09/10
2 (updates)			

## Record of Distribution

The current edition of the RECP will be published and available electronically through the COG website for download to COG members, emergency management personnel, and the public.



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## Base Plan

### I. Introduction

The Metropolitan Washington COG is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit association representing local governments in the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's members are the elected officials from a number of local governments in the NCR, plus area delegation members from the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives.

This Plan applies to the NCR, which is defined as the District of Columbia, including the Supreme Court and the United States Capitol; Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties in Virginia; and all cities existing in Maryland or Virginia within the geographic area designated by the outer boundaries of the combined counties listed in United States Code [40 USC 71 (b)]. For the purposes of this Plan, the term region is expanded to include Frederick County in Maryland and thus include all COG member jurisdictions. COG provides a focus for action and develops sound regional responses to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, human services, population growth, public safety, and transportation.

The events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent anthrax attacks in the Washington area highlighted the need for a regional coordination plan that has new policies, protocols, and procedures to improve coordination and communication in anticipation of potential future regional emergencies. The RECP has been developed under the auspices of COG to facilitate coordination and communications for major incidents or planned events affecting the region.

### A. Purpose

The purpose of the RECP is to provide guidance for COG's members plus other state and federal governmental agencies, the private sector, volunteer organizations, and schools and universities to collaborate in planning, communication, information sharing, and coordination activities before, during, and after a regional incident or planned event.

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▪ District of Columbia       | ▪ Falls Church, Virginia           |
| ▪ Alexandria, Virginia       | ▪ Frederick County, Maryland       |
| ▪ Arlington County, Virginia | ▪ Gaithersburg, Maryland           |
| ▪ Bladensburg, Maryland      | ▪ Greenbelt, Maryland              |
| ▪ Bowie, Maryland            | ▪ Loudoun County, Virginia         |
| ▪ Fairfax, Virginia          | ▪ Montgomery County, Maryland      |
| ▪ Frederick, Maryland        | ▪ Prince George's County, Maryland |
| ▪ Manassas, Virginia         | ▪ Prince William County, Virginia  |
| ▪ Manassas Park, Virginia    | ▪ Rockville, Maryland              |
| ▪ College Park, Maryland     | ▪ Takoma Park, Maryland            |
| ▪ Fairfax County, Virginia   |                                    |

### B. Scope

1. The scope of the plan is deliberately broad, intended to include the activities and capabilities of all organizations, governments, business, and non-governmental organizations that might have a role in anticipating or responding to major threats or hazards in the region.



2. A **regional planned event** is any situation that occurs within or outside of the NCR that has the **potential to disrupt** essential services or mobility, or jeopardize public health and safety on a regional basis.
3. A **regional incident** is any situation that occurs within or outside of the NCR that **has disrupted** essential services or mobility, or jeopardized public health and safety on a regional basis. This situation:
  - May occur without warning;
  - Has large-scale regional impacts;
  - Has high regional consequences;
  - Has operations continuing over a protracted period of time; and
  - Necessitates all local, state, and federal emergency systems to be activated.
4. The RECP is always available for implementation.
5. The plan is scalable, allowing for appropriate levels of coordination and information exchange to deal with a regional emergency.
6. Essential elements of the RECP are the RICCS and WebEOC.

The RICCS provides a system for COG's members and representatives of the Federal government, public agencies, private sector, non-governmental organizations, schools and universities to collaborate about planning, communications, information sharing, and coordination before, during, and after a regional incident or event.

WebEOC is another tool the region may use. The database management system allows for the logging of incidents, summaries of data, and preparation of reports. WebEOC also enables jurisdictions to view events or incidents posted by other jurisdictions throughout the region.

### C. Organization of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan

The RECP contains a Base Plan, Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs), as well as Support Annexes and Appendices.

1. **Base Plan**—The Base Plan (the Plan) covers the purpose, scope, roles, and relationships among member organizations as they relate to regional communication, coordination, and information sharing. The Plan describes how the RICCS will facilitate this process. Additionally, the Plan also describes the maintenance and revision processes as well as management matters.
2. **Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs)**—An R-ESF is a basic function shared by all jurisdictions. Individual R-ESFs identify organizations with resources and capabilities for a particular type of assistance or requirement frequently needed in a regional incident or event. R-ESFs are a convenient way of grouping similar organizations and activities from participating jurisdictions. R-ESFs can include any organization with a supporting relationship to the specified function.

Each of the R-ESF annexes uses the same format to identify participating organizations, establish basic policies and planning assumptions that will guide activities, and explain how they will communicate and coordinate with



each other and with other regional partners. The R-ESF structure of the RECP parallels the ESF structure of the National Response Framework (NRF) and the District of Columbia District Response Plan (DRP).

3. **Support Annexes**—Each of these Annexes are basically “mini-plans” prepared and targeted to address specific subject areas that may have unique considerations or span responsibilities of several organizations, such as dealing with the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), or the Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination (REETC) Annex.
4. **Appendices**—These provide general reference sources for information, background, or guidance when using the RECP.

## II. Policies

- A. The RECP applies to the key stakeholders in the NCR.
- B. The RECP does not supersede existing policies, authorities, plans, or procedures that member and stakeholder organizations currently have in place. Information on existing policies and procedures of member and stakeholder organizations can be found in the appropriate state and local emergency plans.
- C. Additional regional communications and coordination policies and procedures will be developed as necessary.

## III. Situation

### A. Hazards Affecting the Region

The NCR has some special characteristics, including varied terrain and geography; the international prominence of the major buildings and monuments in and around Washington, DC; and the mixed distribution of industrial, commercial and office complexes (government and civilian) in the member jurisdictions. Consequently, many types of threats and hazards, with varying probabilities and intensities, may affect the area. For example, meteorological hazards, such as a hurricane, may affect the entire region, but industrial accidents/incidents are more likely to affect those areas within the member jurisdictions that have concentrations of industrial and commercial activity. Although Washington, DC has little industry, and is subject to relatively few natural hazards, it is target-rich for possible civil disorder and terrorist events because of its significant and symbolic structures and monuments

Assessments of the vulnerabilities, risks, and likely impacts of each of these hazards/threats pose should be done by each jurisdiction in the NCR as well as collectively for regional planning purposes. The following provides a partial listing of the most likely potential hazards that the region faces.

1. Natural Hazards, such as:
  - Urban floods
  - Winter storms
  - Tornadoes
  - Thunderstorms
  - Hurricanes
  - Extreme heat or extreme cold
  - Virus or epidemic
  - Drought
  - Earthquakes
2. Human-induced Hazards, such as:
  - Special events
  - Hazardous materials



- Workplace violence
- Transportation accidents/incidents
- Infrastructure outages (water, electricity, communications)

3. Terrorism, such as:

- Conventional weapons
- Incendiary devices (i.e. car bombs, improvised explosive devices)
- Biological or chemical agents
- Radiological agent
- Nuclear agent
- Cyber-terrorism
- Weapons of mass destruction (one or more of the above)

The consequences of these emergencies have the potential to disrupt essential services or mobility, or adversely affect public health and safety and regional infrastructure to varying degrees.

When assessing the need for regional notification or involvement, several factors must be taken into account:

- **Onset**—First, the detection of any regional incident is key to determining who must be notified and the amount of information available. Actual incidents can be fast-paced or slow to develop, and may be detected in several ways—by direct observation, chemical or biological detection, or medical surveillance—and may be reported as they occur by authorities, private entities, the media, and/or the federal government.
- **Magnitude**—Once authorities are notified of a threatened, impending, or actual emergency, the magnitude of the event becomes the driving force behind decision making. The event may be limited to one functional area (e.g., major snowstorm that disrupts transportation) or extend to many (a weapons of mass destruction event impacting several functions). In addition, incidents may be of local concern, have regional impacts, and/or require a federal response.
- **Impact**—Another important consideration is the geographic area affected. The impacted zone may extend beyond the immediate disaster area to neighboring jurisdictions, and the incident may involve supporting jurisdictions, through mutual aid or other agreements. In such circumstances, inter-jurisdictional communication and coordination is key.

## IV. Planning Assumptions

1. RECP's Purpose/Intent/Coverage

- The RECP will not usurp or infringe on the authorities, plans, procedures, or prerogatives of any participating jurisdiction, agency, or organization.
- All necessary decisions affecting response, recovery, protective actions, public health and safety advisories, etc., will be made by responsible officials under their existing authorities, policies, plans, and procedures.



- A major regional incident will cause numerous fatalities and injuries, property loss, economical and cyber loss, and/or disruption of normal life line systems (e.g. electric, gas, water, etc.) It may have a major impact on the regional economic, physical, and social infrastructures.
- A large number of casualties, damage to buildings and basic infrastructure, and disruption of essential public services will overwhelm the capabilities of individual jurisdictions to meet the needs of the situation.
- Establishing common terminology and structuring the plan for compatibility with accepted local, state, and federal emergency plans will improve efficiency and effectiveness in regional communications and coordination.
- Relationship with Plans and Procedures of Signatories will be established.
- Emergency response decisions will be enhanced by the availability of timely and accurate information.
- The plan focuses on regional communication, to provide timely and accurate information that facilitates regional coordination.
- The signatories to the RECP will reference and incorporate relevant sections of the RECP in the plans and procedures of their primary organizations.

## 2. Relationships with External Organizations

- The degree of state and federal involvement will be related to the severity and magnitude of the event as well as a jurisdiction's need for external support.
- COG created a Regional Emergency Preparedness Council, which will manage and maintain the RECP. The Emergency Preparedness Council is an advisory body which reports to the COG Board of Directors. It is composed of:
  - Six elected officials representing COG member jurisdictions: two each from the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
  - Chairs of the COG professional and technical committees of chief administrative officers, police chiefs, fire chiefs, public health officers, emergency management administrators, and other internal COG committees involved in disaster preparedness and response;
  - Directors of emergency management agencies and departments of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
  - Representatives of the Departments of Transportation of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
  - Chairs or other designees of the Homeland Security Councils of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
  - COG's Executive Director; and
  - Representatives of such institutions and agencies of the federal government and organizations representing the private, quasi-public, and non-profit sectors as may be designated jointly by the EPC Chair and the COG Board Chair, and invited to participate, such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of Personnel Management, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the General Services



Administration, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Non-Profit Roundtable of Greater Washington.

- The EPC can add groups, institutions, and individuals to the ESF Working Groups, or expand its own membership with non-voting members.

## V. Concept of Coordination

### A. General

1. Most incidents are handled by individual jurisdictions using standard operational plans and procedures. When the capabilities of a jurisdiction are exceeded, the impacted locality may request additional help from regional partners to support emergency response efforts by means of mutual aid agreements. Inter-state assistance can also be engaged through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). The federal government may be requested (by the state) to provide supplemental assistance when the consequences of a disaster exceed local and state government capability. If requested, the federal government can mobilize an array of resources to support state and local efforts. These resources are provided under the framework of the NRF. Federal response to potential or actual terrorist threats or incidents, particularly one involving weapons of mass destruction, is outlined in the United States Government Interagency Domestic Terrorism Concept of Operations Plan (CONPLAN).
2. State and local operations plans employ a multi-jurisdictional coordination structure that uses the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS). The NRF also uses this structure. The ICS uses common terminology, modular organization, integrated communications, action planning, and pre-designated facilities.
3. Communication before, during, and after an incident facilitates effective relationships among member organizations and ensures that the exchange of accurate information occurs on a regular basis. The word communication is used here to mean the process by which information exchange takes place among members of the COG executive leadership, chief administrative officers (CAOs), state and federal agencies and other public-sector agencies, COG working groups, private-sector groups, schools, hospitals, and others as necessary to facilitate coordinated regional information sharing. The expectation is that there will be timely and accurate information to share with each other that will be used to make good decisions. Use of the 1<sup>st</sup> Hour Checklist (located at end of Base Plan section) as an outline of initial actions and "next steps" will ensure all involved entities are updated with all available information regarding the incident or event.

### B. Organization

To facilitate the sharing of information, functional activity areas that may be needed during a regional incident or event have been identified. These functions allow for channeling the tremendous amount of information gathered in a regional incident or event into discrete, definable sections for jurisdictions to share information regionally. There are representatives from each COG member organization in the functions. These R-ESFs are:

1. R-ESF #1—Transportation
2. R-ESF #2—Communications Infrastructure
3. R-ESF #3—Public Works and Engineering
4. R-ESF #4—Firefighting
5. R-ESF #5—Emergency Management
6. R-ESF #6— Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services





7. R-ESF #7—Logistics Management and Resource Support
8. R-ESF #8—Public Health and Medical Services
9. R-ESF #9—Search and Rescue
10. R-ESF #10—Oil and Hazardous Materials Response
11. R-ESF #11—Agriculture and Natural Resources
12. R-ESF #12—Energy
13. R-ESF #13—Public Safety and Security
14. R-ESF #14—Long Term Community Recovery
15. R-ESF #15—External Affairs
16. R-ESF #16—Volunteer and Donation Management

A regional incident or event may require the use of only one or many R-ESFs. Each R-ESF is responsible for coordinating the aspects of any event falling within its area of responsibility. Each R-ESF should be prepared to provide information and recommendations to decision makers. There will be events that never require executive decision-making at the CAO's or elected officials' level, in which case, coordination can be handled within each R-ESF area. A regional incident or event may also require the use of one or more Support Annexes and work by the Support Annexes workgroups.

### C. Detection, Notification and Assessment

Key decision makers, subject-matter experts, and R-ESF members will be notified of an incident through the RICCS. Upon notification, all should begin implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Hour Checklist, located after the Base Plan in this document.

If an incident takes place in a single jurisdiction, the responding entity will review the situation and address the event. The local or state governments using their assets will assess the event and, following its standard operating procedures, request from the RICCS Host Center or initiate a regional notification about the event through RICCS, if the situation is judged to be of regional concern by the responding jurisdiction. When in doubt an event should be considered regional due to the fact that it will at least involve response assets that will no longer be available to the region if a larger event occurs. When an incident assumes the characteristics of a regional incident (as defined on page 10), R-ESF #5—Emergency Management - will be used to collect and share information with affected parties. R-ESF #5 core participants will receive all RICCS messages.

Depending on the significance and pace of the incident, the local government or the local emergency management director/CAO, following their standard operating procedures, will determine the need to notify R-ESFs and/or the CAOs. Incident assessment information will be provided to R-ESF #5 through RICCS, WebEOC, or WAWAS from the local responder and potentially through R-ESFs.

RICCS notification can also occur at the request of authorized parties (e.g., any CAO/designees or other members of functional area R-ESFs including state and federal authorities).

**National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS)** - Created by the Department of Homeland Security to replace the Homeland Security Advisory System, the National Terrorism Advisory System is the model intended to more effectively communicate information about terrorist threats by providing timely, detailed information to the public, government agencies, first responders, airports and other transportation hubs, and the private sector. Under this new system, DHS will coordinate with other federal entities to issue formal, detailed alerts when the federal government receives information about a specific or credible terrorist threat. The alerts also will provide a concise summary of the potential threat, information about actions being taken to ensure public safety, and recommended steps that individuals and communities, businesses and governments can take.



### NTAS Alerts:

After reviewing the available information, the Secretary of Homeland Security will decide, in coordination with other Federal entities, whether an NTAS Alert should be issued.

NTAS Alerts will only be issued when credible information is available.

These alerts will include a clear statement that there is an **imminent threat** or **elevated threat**. Using available information, the alerts will provide a concise summary of the potential threat, information about actions being taken to ensure public safety, and recommended steps that individuals, communities, businesses and governments can take to help prevent, mitigate or respond to the threat.

The NTAS Alerts will be based on the nature of the threat: in some cases, alerts will be sent directly to law enforcement or affected areas of the private sector, while in others, alerts will be issued more broadly to the American people through both official and media channels.

NTAS Alerts contain a **sunset** provision indicating a specific date when the alert expires - there will not be a constant NTAS Alert or blanket warning that there is an overarching threat. If threat information changes for an alert, the Secretary of Homeland Security may announce an updated NTAS Alert. All changes, including the announcement that cancels an NTAS Alert, will be distributed the same way as the original alert.

## Imminent Threat Alert

Warns of a credible, specific, and impending terrorist threat against the United States.

## Elevated Threat Alert

Warns of a credible terrorist threat against the United States.

## Sunset Provision

An individual threat alert is issued for a specific time period and then automatically expires. It may be extended if new information becomes available or the threat evolves.



## D. Coordination

The RICCS is a virtual system with text message and conference call capabilities that was designed to facilitate regional communication. RICCS will facilitate coordination and communication of events that occur in the NCR. Participating organizations will use multiple means of communication, including conference calling, WebEOC, WAWAS, and wireless communication systems. (See details in R-ESF #2—Communications and R-ESF #5— Emergency Management). Technology will be leveraged to the maximum extent possible by all jurisdictions to achieve optimum efficiency and effectiveness of the communications as well as the information-sharing features of the system. Whether CAOs and other leaders make decisions collaboratively or independently, RICCS serves as a vehicle for communicating regional information, and helps decision makers respond in a coordinated, consistent manner with a common message.

If an incident affects multiple jurisdictions or the entire region, RICCS will be utilized to rapidly convene the appropriate R-ESFs, and potentially the CAOs, to discuss the regional implications of the incident and actions to be taken. If a regional incident is highly probable, information will be solicited from the affected jurisdiction and input will be sought from the appropriate R-ESFs. R-ESF #5— Emergency Management, which serves as the information broker, will gather and share key information with regional partners to facilitate decision making.

### 1. Initial Actions

Once incident detection has occurred, the R-ESF #5 function and the RICCS system provide the platform for interaction among R-ESFs. Figure 1 shows the Incident Information Exchange and provides an overview of the interaction among the R-ESFs.

- **Notification**—Key decision makers, subject-matter experts, and R-ESF members are notified via the RICCS when a regional incident or event takes place.
- **Conference-calling Capability**—RICCS conference-calling capability brings together R-ESFs members and decision makers as necessary to discuss the event. The capability is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

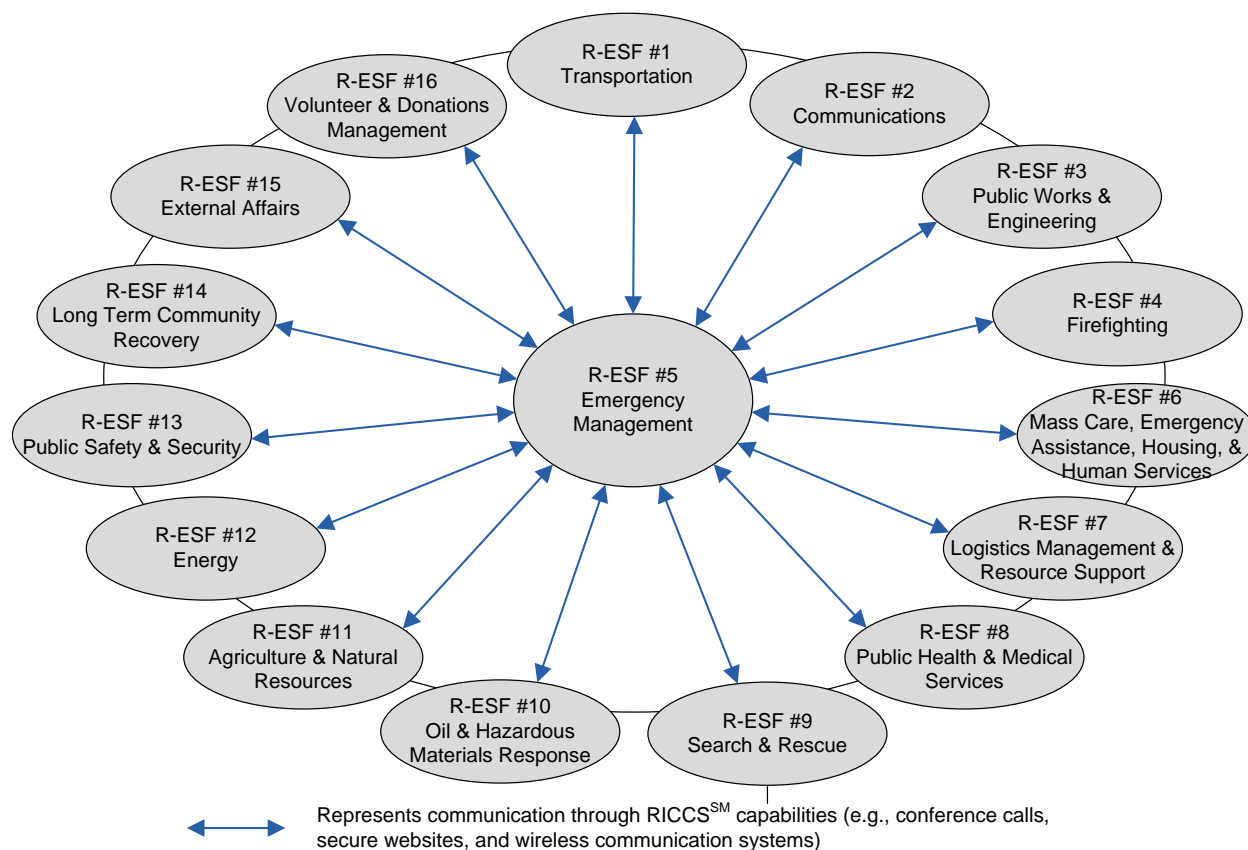


Figure 1. Incident Information

A conference call of R-ESFs and/or CAOs may be convened based on the request of any or all of the following:

- The local responding emergency communication center;
- The affected jurisdiction's CAO or designee;
- The CAO of any other jurisdiction within the region;
- Affected, or potentially affected, R-ESF members (i.e., local, state, federal, public, and private); or
- Executive Director of COG or designee(s).

COG is the coordinating agency for all RICCS Conference Calls requests. CAO conference calls are scheduled with the approval of the chair, but can proceed if the chair is unavailable. It is recommended that all participants in CAO conference calls utilize the included 1<sup>st</sup> Hour Checklist. COG may seek approval of the R-ESF call schedule from the CAO chair if many simultaneous calls are requested. Request for calls may go directly to COG staff, be texted to the RICCS Host Center Group, or go to DC HSEMA, the RICCS Host Center. COG staff is available to deal with call requests off hours, but DC HSEMA is also authorized to schedule calls if COG staff is unavailable.

As part of each R-ESF, Essential Elements of Information (EEl)s are described. The EEl)s will vary for each R-ESF, although some basic information may be common to all. The EEl)s are what are reported to R-ESF #5 and will help in developing an initial impact assessment.



## 2. Continuing Actions

The RICCS will facilitate implementation of specified supporting functions as required during regional incidents and emergencies by R-ESF participants and COG staff. Pre-designated staff and back-ups will be trained and able to carry out these functions on an on-call basis.

- **Incident tracking and status reporting**—R-ESF #5— Emergency Management will maintain a regional incident tracking and situation status reporting system which will be available on WebEOC. Pre-designated staff will be assigned the job of continuously updating the information database.
- **Assessment**—R-ESF #5— Emergency Management will facilitate assessment of regional emergencies by bringing together “experts” from responding organizations/jurisdictions and R-ESFs. The assessment information will be available to authorized parties via conference calls, e-mail, or WebEOC.
- **Coordination of decision-making**—Should a regional incident or emergency occur, RICCS facilitates the coordination of decisional outcomes such as early release of employees, evacuation, school openings or closings, health issues, etc.
- **Creation of common messages**—To ensure implementation of the “many voices, one message” objective, R-ESF #15 assists decision-makers by crafting a common message that is made available to the chief elected officials and other authoritative spokespersons.

## 3. Stand Down

As the regional effort in responding to an emergency diminishes, coordination across jurisdictions will return to normal levels. Depending on the needs of the situation, R-ESFs will scale back use of RICCS to share functional information.

## 4. After-action Review

COG will facilitate the evaluation of any regional emergency coordination efforts. Using information captured in R-ESF #5 and a variety of facilitation tools, appropriate organizations will be brought together to determine lessons learned and areas for improvement. These lessons learned will be used to improve the RECP and the technology and protocols supporting RICCS.

## E. Concurrent Implementation with Other Emergency Plans

The RECP will be implemented at the same time one or more local operations plans are implemented. Operational authority will remain with the jurisdictions. The RECP will also be implemented at the same time state and federal operations plans are implemented, with appropriate operational authority remaining within state and federal control.

The RICCS is not intended to supersede, replace, or duplicate the existing communications and information sharing that routinely occurs among federal, state, and local emergency management organizations. Rather, it intends to focus on information and coordination from the regional perspective.

## F. Multi-Agency Coordinating Centers

Emergency operations centers of member jurisdictions may be activated and in operation during a regional event. The locations may facilitate information sharing on a regional basis through the RICCS.



## VI. Organizations Active in Regional Emergency Support Functions

The following groups will carry out activities associated with the 16 R-ESFs. (See specific R-ESFs for details on each group's roles and responsibilities.)

- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- Cities, counties, and states with membership in COG
- Federal agencies
- Public-sector organizations (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, water and wastewater utilities, etc.)
- Greater Washington Board of Trade
- Schools and universities
- Private-sector organizations
- Community associations
- Special-interest associations
- Non-Governmental/Non-Profit organizations





## VII. Coordination of Communications

### **Common Toolsets (Unclassified Systems)**

- **Washington Area Warning System (WAWAS)**
- **Regional Incident Communications & Coordination System (RICCS)**
- **Regional WebEOC**
- **Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN)**
- **Video-conference System (VTC)**

### **Washington Area Warning System (WAWAS)**



**Host:** DC HSEMA

**Network Control:** DC HSEMA

**Means:** Rapid, non-secure, hard-wired telephonic notification system

**Operation:** 24-Hour

**Purpose:** Rapid voice interaction for the Washington Metropolitan Area. Provides warning information, emergency messages, and interagency coordination.

**Primary Use:** Daily information-sharing and Emergency Alert

**Target:** Operations Centers

**Manager:** Approves subscribers, maintains contact information, monitors circuit and maintains network discipline.

**Recipients:** Approximately 140 subscribers at the local, state and federal level

### RICCS “Operations Center” Group



**Ownership:** Metropolitan Washington Chief Administrative Officers Committee

**Network Control:** MWCOG

**Means:** Non-secure, text messaging via email, cell phone, pager, blackberry & wireless PDA

**Operation:** 24-Hour

**Purpose:** Support regional communications and coordination; central communications between R-ESF

**Primary Use:** Alert notification and daily information-sharing

**Target:** Subscribers and Operations Centers thru special user group. Use Office Mail Box (OMB)

**Manager:** Host Centers (COG, DC HSEMA, MEMA, VDEM, Fairfax & Montgomery County)

**Recipients:** Local, state & federal operations centers

### National Capital Region WebEOC

**Ownership:** Various regional partners

**Network Control:** various

**Means:** Non-secure, web-based application

**Operation:** 24-Hour

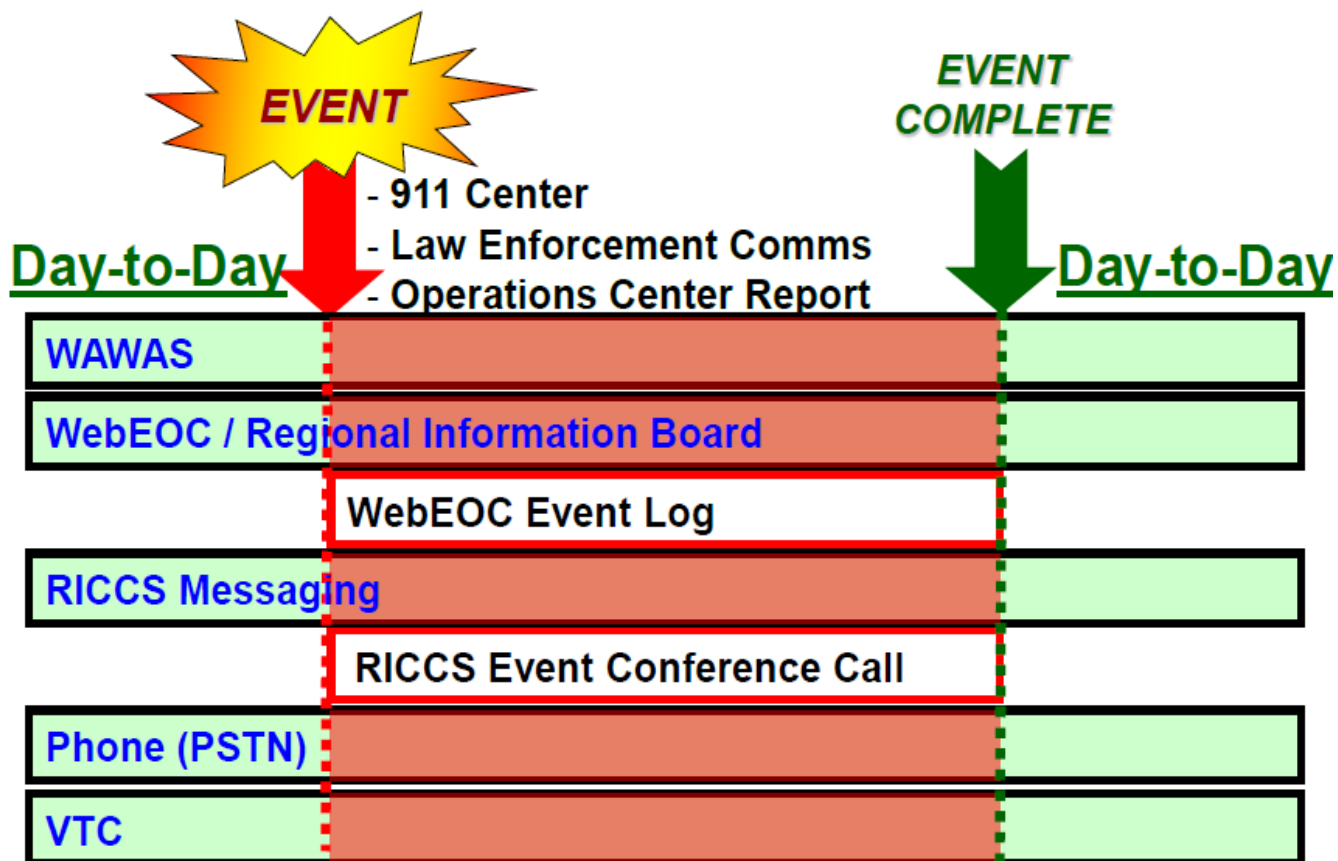
**Purpose:** Support daily operations by disseminating information to create a regional common operating picture

**Primary Use:** Information-sharing and situational awareness through Regional Event Boards.

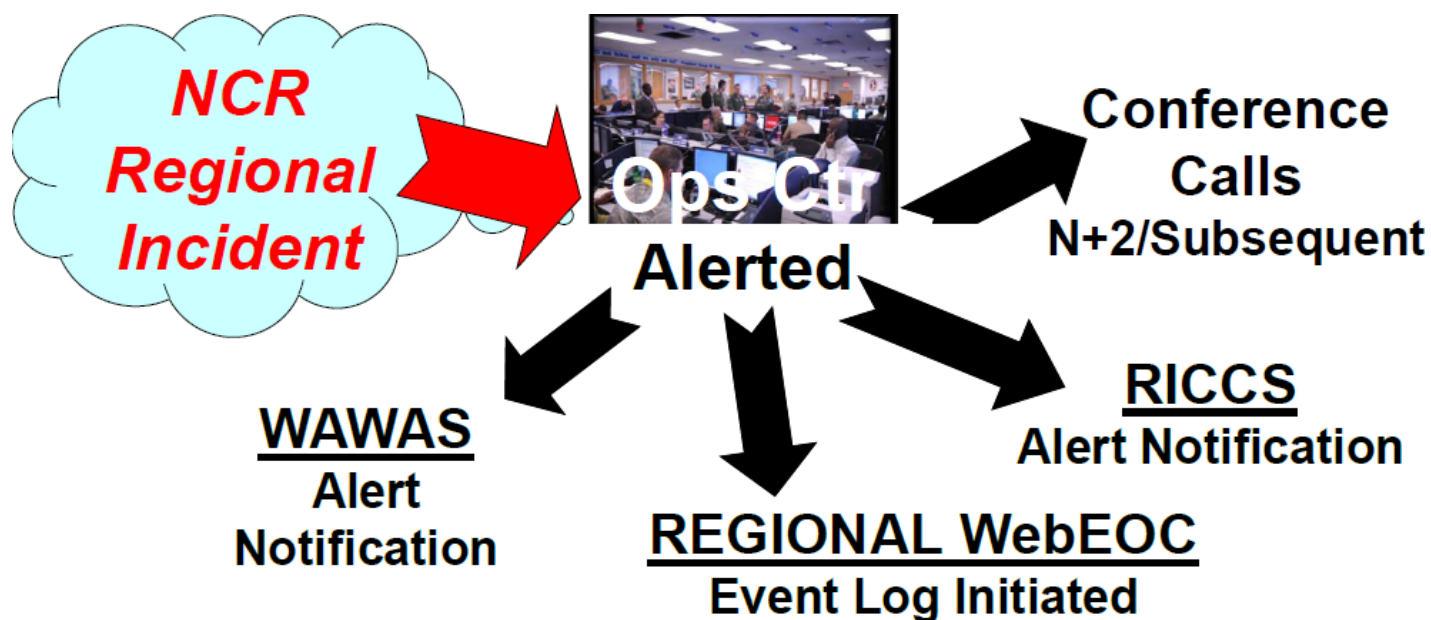
**Manager:** NCR WebEOC Subcommittee

**Recipients:** Local, state & federal agency Operations Centers

## NCR Operations Center Communications



*“Train The Way We Will Respond”*



- Operations Center of Origin – Local, State or Federal Operations Center that **first receives and disseminates** the initial information
- Jurisdictional Operations Center – The Operations Center, defined by geography or responsibility, **responsible for sustaining a continuous flow of information** until event or activity officially concludes

**REPORT -- REPORT -- REPORT**

## Communications Among Operations Centers

