

Disaster Services Unit

Guidance for State Service Commission Standard Operating Procedures



Introduction

A disaster standard operating procedure (SOP) can support effective disaster response, and alleviate unnecessary stress of State Service Commission staff. This guide will support Commissions as they identify and plan for disaster response and recovery operations.

We recommend that each Commission develop your own disaster SOP to guide operations during disaster response and recovery.

Overview of a Disaster Standard Operating Procedure

A disaster SOP documents the policies, procedures, and that related to operations during a disaster. The SOP is a vital planning tool to ensure formal agreements and partnerships with state emergency management, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), and other partners are executed effectively.

The disaster SOP may be included in the Commission's Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP). The SOP focuses on externally facing operations and disaster related communications in the event of disaster. The SOP should be reviewed annually and updated with any changes to agreements, roles, responsibilities, and capabilities.

Include the following sections in a Disaster SOP:

- Purpose
- Concept of Operations
- Preparedness and Training
- Notifications and Triggers for Activation
- Emergency Functions
- Coordination and Organization
- Public Information and Messaging
- Transition from Response to Recovery
- Appendices

Below is a brief overview of each section and specific points that should be included. Feel free to customize; the SOP should be a reflection of your context and plans. Each SOP will be unique.

Purpose

The purpose section is the foundation for the rest of the State Service Commission SOP. It is a general statement of what the plan is meant to do and why the plan is necessary. The statement should be supported by a brief synopsis of the elements covered within the plan.

Concept of Operations

This section summarizes the concept of operations (CONOPS), meaning the roles and responsibilities for the State Service Commission during an emergency. This section should include:

- Specific desired outcomes of commission operations during disaster
- A summary of any formal agreements and the purpose of those agreements These formal agreements (state Emergency Operations Plans, MOUs, MOAs, Grantee Agreements, etc.) should be attached to the SOP in the Appendices section for quick reference
- Brief description of emergency management activation levels and when/if a Commission interacts with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- The scope of emergency and disaster response and the partners or grantees that will play a role in executing this plan
- The geographic areas to which the plan applies

Preparedness and Training

This section outlines pre-disaster planning and training activities for the State Service Commission staff and/or grantees. This section should include:

- Pre-assigned emergency functions for staff and clarify staff roles prior to an emergency
- List of trainings that support Commission operations during disaster and/or directly contribute to assigned emergency functions for staff
- Required training for grantees to support their pre-identified functions in disaster
- Press release templates with pre-scripted messages to distribute (e.g., “Do not self-deploy to volunteer” and “Send money, not goods”) points of contact for additional information about volunteering and donations.

Notification and Triggers for Activation

This section should outline the triggers that will initiate disaster operations and the process that you will take to notify board members, staff, grantees, partners, and other stakeholders. This section should include:

- Contact lists and calling trees for staff and programs
- Checklists with actions that need to be taken and resources that are needed
- Method of contact (email, phone call, text, etc.) Remember that electricity, internet, and cell phone towers may become disabled during a disaster
- Contact information for partner agencies
- Who will initiate contact with which organizations and stakeholders

Emergency Functions

This section of the plan describes how you will respond in the event of a disaster. This section should include:

- List of the functions to be performed by the Commission, its programs, and partners, by position and organization and the agreements that support those functions (MOU/MOAs/Grantee agreements/etc.)
- A matrix of organizations and areas of responsibility and functions
- A table that describes Commission emergency functions and the primary and alternate staff who will be assigned to those roles

Common disaster functions include:

| |
|----------------------------|
| Emergency Functions |
| State Service Commission |
| Staffing the state EOC |

| Emergency Functions |
|--|
| Answering emergency hotlines and/or a 2-1-1 call-center |
| Backfilling other day-to-day functions that need to be maintained |
| Gathering information and sharing with constituents |
| Supporting VOAD efforts. |
| Linking volunteers with skills that are needed (e.g., shelters, Volunteer Reception Centers) |
| Providing information to survivors |
| Completing mission assignments and filling resource requests |
| Programs/Grantees |
| Sand bagging |
| Levy patrol |
| Debris/tree removal |
| VRC operations |
| School-based programs to encourage community evacuations |
| Mental health canvassing |
| External Partners |
| Shelter operations |
| VRC operations |
| Debris removal |

Coordination and Organization

This section describes the framework for how the Commission and its programs will coordinate with the State Emergency Management Agency (EMA), as well as Commission partners that have roles and responsibilities in responding to and recovering from the emergency (e.g., VOAD). Organizational charts, especially those depicting how the Commission and its partners fit into the state EMA’s incident command system or Multiagency Coordination System structure, are helpful. This section should include:

- Protocols and procedures to communicate with the state EMA and partners during emergencies and disasters.
- Expectations regarding participation in conference calls, situation reports, and incident action plans
- Procedure by which the Commission will be tasked with mission assignments from the state EMA
- Procedures the Commission will be expected to follow to address mission assignments

Public information and Messaging

This section describes the Commission’s public information function. It should include how, when and who, will:

- Gather and validate information
- Prepare information releases (pre-scripted releases should be archived in the appendix)
- Brief media representatives
- Coordinate press conferences
- Supervise public information staff and coordinate with the public information staff from partner organizations and the Joint Information Center (JIC), to ensure consistent messaging

Transition from Response to Recovery

This section describes the operational organization that the Commission and its programs will implement to transition from disaster response to recovery. This section should include:

- How and when disaster response functions may be transitioned to local organizations or long term recovery groups
- Which recovery functions will be performed by the Commission, its programs, and its partners, by position and organization
- A matrix of organizations that summarize roles and responsibilities
- Timeline for after action reviews at the end of active response operations and sample format for this report

Common transition functions are:

- Administer disaster funds (e.g., donations, recovery grants, case management administration)
- Long- term community redevelopment projects
- Provide support to organizations that address poverty and disaster services to build broader resiliency (e.g., financial counseling, legal services, children’s programs, and trauma counseling)
- Transition of Volunteer Reception Centers and Donation management sites to community organizations or long term recovery groups

Appendices

This section should include:

- Specific strategies and plans for operations where the Commission plays a direct role and that are too cumbersome for the Concept of Operations such as volunteer reception center operations plans
- Recommended training courses for staff and/or grantees/sub-grantees/programs
- Communication templates such as pre-scripted press releases, situation reports, incident action plans, etc.
- Checklists
- Formal agreements such as MOU/MOAs with partner organizations, disaster grantee agreements, contract agreements, etc.
- Common acronyms – sample list shown below

| Acronym | Term |
|---------|--|
| CERT | Community Emergency Response Team |
| CNCS | Corporation for National and Community Service |
| COAD | Community Organizations Active in Disaster |
| DHS | U.S. Department of Homeland Security |
| DSU | Disaster Services Unit |
| EMA | Emergency Management Agency |
| EMAC | Emergency Management Assistance Compact |
| EOC | Emergency Operations Center |
| ESF | Emergency Support Function |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FOUO | For Official Use Only |
| IAP | Incident Action Plan |
| JIC | Joint Information Center |
| MOA | Memorandum of Agreement |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NCCC | National Civilian Community Corps |

| | |
|------|---|
| PIO | Public Information Officer |
| PPD | Presidential Policy Directive |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| TTX | Tabletop Exercise |
| VOAD | Volunteer Organization Active in a Disaster |
| VRC | Volunteer Reception Center |