

Hidalgo County Emergency Management Plan



Basic Plan

Primary Jurisdiction

Hidalgo County

Other Jurisdictions covered by this Plan

City	County	DDC	Region
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APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

This plan applies to all departments assigned emergency responsibilities in this plan, and to others as designated by the Emergency Manager

The Emergency Manager will provide guidance and direction in the conduct of emergency response and disaster recovery activities.

This plan is hereby approved for implementation and supersedes all previous editions.

Date

County Judge

Date

Emergency Management Coordinator

Record of Changes

This page is used to date and describe changes to this document, followed by the initials of the person who made the change.

Date	Description	Initials

doc. revision 03/01/2016

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Authority and Guidance

This section lists authorities and guidance that govern or inform the development and implementation of the Hidalgo County Emergency Management Plan.

State

- Constitution of the State of Texas
- Health and Safety Code, Chapter 778 (Emergency Management Assistance Compact)
- Executive Order of the Governor Relating to Emergency Management
- Executive Order of the Governor Relating to the National Incident Management System
- Administrative Code, Title 37, Part 1, Chapter 7 (Division of Emergency Management)
- The Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Parts I and II, December 15, 2003
- The Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Part III, February 2004
- Texas Government Code

- Chapter 418 Emergency Management
- Chapter 421 Homeland Security
- Chapter 433 State of Emergency
- Chapter 791 Inter-local Cooperation Contracts

Federal

- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended
- Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, 42 USC Chapter 116
- Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response, 29 CFR 1910.120
- Homeland Security Act of 2002
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive, HSPD-5, Management of Domestic Incidents
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive, HSPD-3, Homeland Security Advisory System
- Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex of the National Response Framework
- Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), 2006
- National Response Framework, January 2008
- Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008
- The National Security Strategy, May 2010
- Emergency Management and Assistance, Code of Federal Regulations, (CFR) 44
- Price-Anderson Amendments Act of 1988, Public Law 100-408, as amended
- Emergency Management Assistance Compact, Public Law 104-321
- National Incident Management System (NIMS), December 2008

Local

- NIMS/ICS Implementation 05/15/2012

Overview

One of the most important functions of government is to protect its citizens, their property and their way of life. In Texas, elected officials and the governor are responsible for meeting dangers to the state and its people presented by emergencies or disasters. The Hidalgo County Plan describes how this duty is discharged in response to emergency incidents and disaster.

Purpose

The purpose of the Hidalgo County Plan is to outline our approach to emergency operations, and is applicable to Hidalgo County. It provides general guidance for emergency management activities and an overview of our methods of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The plan describes our emergency response organization and assigns responsibilities for various emergency tasks. This plan is intended to provide a framework for more specific functional annexes that describe in more detail who does what, when, and how. This plan applies to all local officials, departments, and agencies. The primary audience for the document includes our chief elected official and other elected officials, the emergency management staff, department and agency heads and their senior staff members, leaders of local VOADs, and other who may participate in our mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to include the whole community.

Scope

The Hidalgo County Plan is an all-hazards emergency operations plan that applies to emergencies and disasters within Hidalgo County and secondary jurisdictions as listed in the table below.

City	County	DDC
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The Hidalgo County Plan describes the high-level responsibilities of Hidalgo County agencies and partners who have responsibilities within this plan and within the scope of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Because Texas is committed to a whole-community preparedness approach, the Hidalgo County Plan and those involved in emergency preparedness planning strive to meet the needs of all residents (or constituents), including people with access and functional needs.

The Hidalgo County Plan is intended to provide guidance and is not prescriptive or comprehensive. Readers should use judgment and discretion to determine the most appropriate actions at the time of an incident.

Plan Organization

There are two parts to the Hidalgo County Plan:

- Basic Plan
- Emergency Support Function Annexes

The State Plan is designed to integrate with other state agency or entity plans and annexes.

Component	Description
Basic Plan	Describes the Hidalgo County’s emergency management organization and a system of coordination.
Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annexes	Outline the objectives, policies, concepts of operations and responsibilities of Hidalgo County agencies relative to unique functional activities before, during and after disaster. These annexes may be augmented by other supporting plans.
Support Function Annexes	Describe essential supporting aspects that are common to all incidents and serve as the primary mechanism for providing assistance at the operational level. These annexes may be augmented by other supporting plans.
Hazard-Specific Annexes	Address how Hidalgo County responds to specific types of incidents and may be referenced by other annexes. Hazard annexes may be augmented by other supporting plans.

Definitions and Terms

Acronyms

AAR	After Action Report
ARC	American Red Cross
BSOC	Border Security Operations Center
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIS	Criminal Intelligence Service
COG	Council of Governments
DDC	Disaster District Committee
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DSHS	Department of State Health Services
EMC	Emergency Management Coordinator
EOC	Emergency Operations or Operating Center
FAOC	FEMA Alternate Operations Center
FB	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency, an element of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FOC	FEMA Operations Center
HazMat	Hazardous Material
HSIN-CI	Homeland Security Information Network – Critical Infrastructure
HSOC	Homeland Security Operations Center
HSPD-5	Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 ;
IC	Incident Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
IP	Improvement Plan
JFO	Joint Field Office
JIC	Joint Information Center
JP	Justice of the Peace
JTTF	Joint Terrorism Task Force
ME	Medical Examiner
NOAA	National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRF	National Response Framework
NWS	National Weather Service
OSHA	Occupational Safety & Health Administration
PIO	Public Information Officer
SAR	Search and Rescue
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SOC	State Operations Center
TAHC	Texas Animal Health Commission
TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
TDEM	Texas Division of Emergency Management
TEEX	Texas A&M Engineering Extension
TFS	Texas A&M Forest Service
TRRN	Texas Regional Resource Network
TSA	The Salvation Army
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation

Definitions

1. Area Command (Unified Area Command). An organization established (1) to oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being managed by an ICS organization or (2) to oversee the management of large or multiple incidents to which several Incident Management Teams have been assigned. Sets overall strategy and priorities, allocates critical resources according to priorities, ensures that incidents are properly managed, and ensures that objectives are met and strategies followed. Area Command becomes Unified Area Command when incidents are multijurisdictional.
2. Disaster District. Disaster Districts are regional state emergency management organizations mandated by the Executive Order of the Governor relating to Emergency Management whose boundaries parallel those of Highway Patrol Districts and Sub-Districts of the Texas Department of Public Safety.
3. Disaster District Committee. The DDC consists of a Chairperson (the local Highway Patrol captain or command lieutenant), and agency representatives that mirror the membership of the State Emergency Management Council. The DDC Chairperson, supported by committee members, is responsible for identifying, coordinating the use of, committing, and directing state resources within the district to respond to emergencies.
4. Emergency Operations Center. Specially equipped facilities from which government officials exercise direction and control and

coordinate necessary resources in an emergency situation.

5. Public Information. Information that is disseminated to the public via the news media before, during, and/or after an emergency or disaster ensuring the needs of the whole community are addressed.
6. Emergency Situations. As used in this plan, this term is intended to describe a *range* of occurrences, from a minor incident to a catastrophic disaster. It includes the following:
 - a. Incident. An incident is a situation that is limited in scope and potential effects. Characteristics of an incident include:
 1. Involves a limited area and/or limited population.
 2. Evacuation or in-place sheltering is typically limited to the immediate area of the incident.
 3. Warning and public instructions are provided in the immediate area, not community-wide.
 4. One or two local response agencies or departments acting under an incident commander normally handle incidents. Requests for resource support are normally handled through agency and/or departmental channels.
 5. May require limited external assistance from other local response agencies or contractors.
 6. For the purposes of the NRF, incidents include the full range of occurrences that require an emergency response to protect life or property.
 - b. Emergency. An emergency is a situation that is larger in scope and more severe in terms of actual or potential effects than an incident. Characteristics include:
 1. Involves a large area, significant population, or important facilities.
 2. May require implementation of large-scale evacuation or in-place sheltering and implementation of temporary shelter and mass care operations.
 3. May require community-wide warning and public instructions.
 4. Requires a sizable multi-agency response operating under an incident commander.
 5. May require some external assistance from other local response agencies, contractors, and limited assistance from state or federal agencies.
 6. The EOC will be activated to provide general guidance and direction, coordinate external support, and provide resource support for the incident.
 7. For the purposes of the NRF, an emergency (as defined by the Stafford Act) is "any occasion or instance for which, in the determination of the President, Federal assistance is needed to supplement State and local efforts and capabilities to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of catastrophe in any part of the United States."
 - c. Disaster. A disaster involves the occurrence or threat of significant casualties and/or widespread property damage that is beyond the capability of the local government to handle with its organic resources. Characteristics include:
 1. Involves a large area, a sizable population, and/or important facilities.
 2. May require implementation of large-scale evacuation or in-place sheltering and implementation of temporary shelter and mass care operations.
 3. Requires community-wide warning and public instructions.
 4. Requires a response by all local response agencies operating under one or more incident commanders.
 5. Requires significant external assistance from other local response agencies, contractors, and extensive state or federal assistance.
 6. The EOC will be activated to provide general guidance and direction, provide emergency information to the public, coordinate state and federal support, and coordinate resource support for emergency operations.
 7. For the purposes of the NRF, a *major disaster* (as defined by the Stafford Act) is any catastrophe, regardless of the cause, which in the determination of the President causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster federal assistance.
 - d. Catastrophic Incident. For the purposes of the NRF, this term is used to describe any natural or manmade occurrence that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, property damage, or disruptions that severely affect the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, and/or government functions. An occurrence of this magnitude would result in sustained national impacts over prolonged periods of time, and would immediately overwhelm local and state capabilities. All catastrophic incidents are Incidents of National Significance.
7. Hazard Analysis. A document, published separately from this plan, that identifies the local hazards that have caused or possess the potential to adversely affect public health and safety, public or private property, or the environment.
8. Hazardous Material (Hazmat). A substance in a quantity or form posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and/or property when manufactured, stored, or transported. The substance, by its nature, containment, and reactivity, has the capability for inflicting harm during an accidental occurrence. Is toxic, corrosive, flammable, reactive, an irritant, or a strong sensitizer, and poses a threat to health and the environment when improperly managed. Includes toxic substances, certain

infectious agents, radiological materials, and other related materials such as oil, used oil, petroleum products, and industrial solid waste substances.

9. Incident Action Plan. An oral or written plan containing general objectives reflecting the overall strategy for managing an incident. It may include the identification of operational resources and assignments. It may also include attachments that provide direction and important information for management of an incident during one or more operational periods.
10. Inter-local agreements. Arrangements between governments or organizations, either public or private, for reciprocal aid and assistance during emergency situations where the resources of a single jurisdiction or organization are insufficient or inappropriate for the tasks that must be performed to control the situation. Commonly referred to as mutual aid agreements.
11. Stafford Act. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act authorizes federal agencies to undertake special measures designed to assist the efforts of states in expediting the rendering of aid, assistance, emergency services, and reconstruction and rehabilitation of areas devastated by disaster.
12. Standard Operating Procedures. Approved methods for accomplishing a task or set of tasks. SOPs are typically prepared at the department or agency level. May also be referred to as Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs).

State and Local Alignment

The Hidalgo County Plan complies with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) "Management of Domestic Incidents," Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8) "National Preparedness," the National Response Framework (NRF) and Executive Order RP 40, which mandates the adoption of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the "declared state standard for incident management." The Hidalgo County Plan provides an all-hazards emergency planning framework that is informed by the State of Texas Emergency Operations Plans.

Situation

Population

Hidalgo County has a population of 868,707 in 2021. This population figure is trending up. Hidalgo County has an estimated Functional and Access Needs population of 1,000.

Geography

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 1,583 square miles (4,100 km²), of which 1,571 square miles (4,070 km²) are land and 12 square miles (31 km²) (0.8%) are covered by water. The northern part of the county has sandy and light loamy soils over deep reddish or mottled, clayey subsoils. In some areas, limestone lies within 40 in (1 m) of the surface. The southern part of the county has moderately deep to deep loamy surfaces over clayey subsoils. Along the Rio Grande, brown to red clays occur. Hidalgo County is in the South Texas Plains vegetation area, which features grasses, mesquite, live oaks, and chaparral.

In 1982, 91% of the land was in farms and ranches, with 52% of the farmland under cultivation and 85% irrigated; 51 to 60% of the county was considered prime farmland. The primary crops were sorghum, cotton, corn, and vegetables; Hidalgo County led Texas counties in the production of cabbage, onions, cantaloupes, carrots, and watermelons. The primary fruits and nuts grown in the county were grapefruit, oranges, and pecans. Cattle, milk cows, and hogs were the primary livestock products. Natural resources included caliche, sand, gravel, oil, and gas. Oil and gas production in 1982 totaled 98,487,211,000 cubic feet (2.7888472×10⁹ m³) of gas-well gas, 139,995 barrels of crude oil, 1,101,666 barrels of condensate, and 15,784,000 cubic feet (447,000 m³) of casinghead gas. The climate is subtropical and subhumid. Temperatures range from an average low of 47 °F (8 °C) in January to an average high to 96 °F (36 °C) in July; the average annual temperature is 73 °F (23 °C). Rainfall averages 23 inches (580 mm) a year, and the growing season lasts for 320 days of the year

Hazard Analysis

Natural Hazards			
Hazard Type	Likelihood of Occurrence	Estimated Impact on Public Health and Safety	Estimated Impact on Property
Drought	Likely	Moderate	Moderate
Earthquake	Unlikely	Limited	Limited
Flash Flooding	Highly Likely	Moderate	Moderate
Flooding (river or tidal)	Highly Likely	Moderate	Moderate
Hurricane	Highly Likely	Moderate	Major
Subsidence	Unlikely	Limited	Limited
Tornado	Occasional	Moderate	Moderate
Wildfire	Likely	Limited	Moderate
Winter Storm	Occasional	Moderate	Moderate
Pandemic	Likely	Major	Moderate
Technological Hazards			
Hazard Type	Likelihood of Occurrence	Estimated Impact on Public Health and Safety	Estimated Impact on Property
Dam Failure	Unlikely	Limited	Limited
Energy / Fuel Shortage	Occasional	Limited	Limited
Hazmat/Oil Spill (fixed site)	Occasional	Limited	Limited
Hazmat/Oil Spill (transport)	Occasional	Limited	Limited
Major Structural Failure	Unlikely	Limited	Limited
Nuclear Facility Incident	Unlikely	Limited	Limited
Water System Failure	Occasional	Moderate	Moderate
Security Hazards			
Hazard Type	Likelihood of Occurrence	Estimated Impact on Public Health and Safety	Estimated Impact on Property
Civil Disorder	Unlikely	Limited	Limited
Enemy Military Attack	Unlikely	Limited	Limited
Terrorism	Unlikely	Limited	Limited
Border Security	Highly Likely	Moderate	Moderate

Planning Assumptions

In Texas, planning assumptions are considered to be information accepted by planners as being true, in the absence of facts, in order to provide a planning framework. Hidalgo County planners have made the following assumptions in preparing the Basic Plan:

- Our jurisdiction will continue to be exposed to and subject to the impact of those hazards described above and as well as lesser hazards and others that may develop in the future.
- It is possible for a major disaster to occur at any time and at any place. In many cases dissemination of warning to the public and implementation of increased readiness measures may be possible. However, some emergency situations occur with little or no warning.
- Outside assistance will be available in most emergency situations, affecting our area of jurisdiction. Since it takes time to summon external aid, it is essential for us to be prepared to carry out the initial emergency response on an independent basis.
- Proper mitigation actions, such as floodplain management, and fire inspection, can prevent or reduce disaster related loss. Detailed emergency planning, training of emergency responders and other personnel, and conducting periodic emergency drills and exercises can improve our readiness to deal with emergency situations.

Concept of Operations

Emergency management activities in the state of Texas vary significantly in type, size and complexity. This section outlines the general concept of operations for the Hidalgo County's planned response in support of the basic emergency response and initial recovery operations.

Objectives

The objectives of our emergency management program are to protect public health and safety and preserve public and private property.

This plan is intended to provide a framework for more specific functional annexes that describe in more detail who does what, when, and how. This plan applies to all local officials, departments, and agencies. The primary audience for the document includes our chief elected official and other elected officials, the emergency management staff, department and agency heads and their senior staff members, leaders of local volunteer organizations that support emergency operations, and others who may participate in our mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to include the whole of community.

Emergency Management Coordination

Coordination of emergency management activities typically take place in a couple fixed structures, if not locations. The immediate incident is managed at the Incident Command Post (ICP), which may be established ad hoc, or may be a dedicated structure or unit.

In keeping with best practices, the presumptive Incident Commander is the first capable element on scene. Command may be transferred upon arrival of a higher ranked or better equipped element.

During an emergency, departments will retain administrative and policy control over their employees and equipment, though personnel and equipment will carry out mission assignments as directed by the IC.

Each department is responsible for maintaining their own procedures to be followed during such operations, which incorporate interagency procedures to facilitate coordinated effort.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will have a location available on file and houses the parties responsible for emergency support functions, as well as entities that provide support for the both the ICP and the jurisdiction affected in preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation as necessary.

The Hidalgo County EOC may be activated by:

1. Richard F. Cortez
2. Ricardo Saldana
3. EOC Manager

The EOC serves as an information and intelligence hub. Situation awareness is coordinated through the entities within the EOC, and disseminated to the elements in the field, as well as to neighboring jurisdictions, to elected officials, liaisons to the State of Texas, and to the State Operations Center. As may be deduced, the EOC serves as a form of communication hub as well, though an EOC will not replace the function of a dedicated dispatch or similar communications office.

The major contribution of the EOC to incident management is in resource support. As first responders are stretched thin and gaps form, the EOC manages the flow of logistical support to ensure that elements on the ground have the personnel and equipment needed to function. In addition, the EOC must ensure that the jurisdiction is not paralyzed by any given incident and that resources exist for the jurisdiction beyond the incident site.

The EOC, in their function providing information and guidance regarding an emergency, may handle considerations for mass care activities per ESF 6 and evacuations.

In the event that the EOC is impacted by an incident, an alternate is established at a dissociated location on file. This alternate facility is tested and maintained in accordance with best practices and per local policy/ordinance/SOP.

The Hidalgo County resource list is housed at Office Of Emergency Management and available as needed. This list may or may not be added to this basic plan as an addendum.

Note that the state and its jurisdictions rely on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in planning, training, exercising for, and responding to emergencies and disasters.

In Texas, the initial response to emergencies and disasters is conducted by local jurisdictions working with city or county emergency management officials. A local government is expected to use its own resources and the resources available to it through mutual aid agreements before requesting assistance from the state. However, early communication and coordination is encouraged when additional resources needs can be anticipated.

If a jurisdiction's response resources are overwhelmed, imminently threatened or a local jurisdiction is anticipating a resource need, the jurisdiction may request aid from its local Disaster District Committee (DDC) ([Tex. Adm. Code § 7.24](#)). The DDC serves as clearinghouse for local emergency response support from state agencies and entities. The DDC, when it is activated, is also the liaison between the local jurisdictions and the State Operations Center (SOC).

Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

This section describes the organization and responsibilities of stakeholders with key capabilities during emergency management preparedness, response and initial recovery.

Emergency Management Directors and Coordinators

In Texas, mayors and county judges serve as emergency management directors and bear the responsibility for maintaining an emergency management program within their jurisdictions ([Tex. Gov. Code § 418.1015](#)). This chief elected official is responsible for establishing objectives and policies for emergency management and providing general guidance for disaster response and recovery operations. A mayor or county judge may appoint an emergency management coordinator (EMC) to help discharge these duties.

The mayor or county judge may declare a local disaster, when there is an immediate threat, without the consent of either the city council or county commissioners, respectively. However, the declaration may last no longer than seven days unless continued by the city council or county commissioners.

Voluntary and Private Sector Organizations

Following is a description of various organizations that play a volunteer and vital role in Texas emergency management.

Councils of Governments

Regional Councils of Governments (COGs) are voluntary associations of local governments formed under Texas law ([Tex. Gov. Code Ch. 391](#)). COGs guide the unified development of a region, eliminate duplication and promote regional economies and efficiency. Specific to emergency management, COGs deal with preparedness planning needs that cross the boundaries of individual local governments or that require regional attention. Regional services offered by COGs may include the following:

- Planning and implementing regional homeland security strategies;
- Operating law enforcement training academies;
- Maintaining and improving 911 systems.

Regional Advisory Councils

Regional Advisory Councils (RAC) serve to develop, implement and monitor regional emergency medical services (EMS) trauma system and to facilitate trauma system networking within and among Trauma Service Areas (TSA). Membership in a RAC may include hospitals, physicians, nurses, EMS providers, rehabilitation facilities, dispatchers and community groups. RACs primary functions are to:

- Develop and implement a regional EMS/trauma system plan
- Provide public information and education about prevention of trauma and a trauma system
- Provide a forum for EMS providers and hospitals to address TSA issues
- Network with other RACs
- Document and report trauma system data

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) are an important piece of Texas' emergency response plan. These organizations have the personnel and expertise to augment the state's capabilities or provide capabilities that the state does not have.

Business and Industry Partnerships

Business and industry partners play a key role before, during and after disasters. Texas businesses are involved in emergencies because large portions of Texas' infrastructure are privately owned. In addition large amounts of the hazardous materials moved within, or through, Texas, are handled by private industry. Business and industry partners must observe standards for the protection of critical infrastructure and develop individual continuity of operations plans. During disasters, many businesses may also work with the state and with VOADs to provide resources during incident response and recovery.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) supports emergency management throughout the nation and in Texas by providing tools, resources and guidance to support Texas' emergency management coordination. When a disaster occurs that exceeds, or is anticipated to exceed, the state's resource capabilities, the federal government implements the National Response Framework (NRF) to access federal departments and agency capabilities, organize the federal response and ensure coordination with all response partners, FEMA Region VI and TDEM.

Readiness Levels

Many emergencies follow some recognizable build-up period, which allows for a similarly gradual increase in Hidalgo County's state of readiness. We utilize a 4 tier system. Readiness levels are determined by the Chief Elected Official or, in some circumstances, by the EMC. General actions taken at each level may be outlined herein or in the ESFs, while specific actions will be detailed in agency SOPs or general manuals.

The following Readiness Levels will be used to measure our alert posture:

Level 4: Normal Conditions

Incidents occur and officials are notified. One or more department agencies respond to handle the incident. An ICP may or may not be established. Limited assistance may be requested from other jurisdictions.

Normal operations of government are not impacted.

Level 3: Increased Readiness

A situation that presents a greater potential threat than "Normal Conditions", but poses no immediate threat to life and/or property. Increased readiness actions may be appropriate when the situations similar to the following occur:

1. Tropical Weather: A tropical weather system has developed that may impact the local area. Readiness actions may include regular monitoring, a review of applicable plans and resource status, determining staff availability and placing personnel on standby.
2. Tornado Watch: There is a possibility that tornadoes may form. Readiness Actions may include situation monitoring and placing certain staff on alert.
3. Flash Flood Watch: Flash Flooding is possible due to heavy rains or anticipated heavy rains. Readiness actions may include increased situation monitoring, reconnaissance of areas susceptible to flood, and putting out signage.
4. Wildfire Threat: The conditions exist for wildfire. Readiness actions may include pre-positioning resources at at-risk areas, arranging for water tanker support, conducting aerial surveillance, and issuing burn bans.
5. Mass Gathering: A mass gathering may be taking place with the potential to become disruptive or dangerous. Readiness actions may include reviewing security procedures, traffic control SOP, fire protection and first aid planning and determining additional requirements.

Declaration of Level 3 will generally require the initiation of the "Increased Readiness" activities defined in each ESF as applicable.

Level 2: High Readiness

A situation with a significant potential and probability of causing loss of life and/or property exists. This condition normally requires some degree of warning to the public, if possible. Actions could be triggered by severe weather warnings issued by the National Weather Service such as:

1. Tropical Weather Threat: A tropical system may impact the area within 72 hours. Readiness actions may include continuous storm monitoring, identifying worst case decision points, increased preparedness of personnel and equipment, updating evacuation checklists, verifying evacuation route status, and providing the public information for techniques to protect homes and businesses on the evacuation routes.
2. Tornado Warning: Issued when a tornado has actually been sighted in the vicinity or indicated by radio, and may strike in the local area. Readiness actions may include activating the EOC, continuous situation monitoring, and notifying the public.
3. Flash Flood Warning: Issued to alert persons that flash flooding is imminent or occurring in specific areas, and that immediate actions should be undertaken. Readiness Actions may include notifying the public about the warning, evacuating low lying areas, opening shelters to house evacuees, and continuous situation monitoring.
4. Mass Gathering: Civil disorder is occurring with large-scale localized violence, or is imminent. Readiness actions may include increased law enforcement presence, putting hospitals and fire departments on alert, and continuous situation monitoring.

Declaration of a Level 2 will generally require the initiation of the "High Readiness" activities identified

in each ESF as applicable.

Level 1: Maximum Readiness

A situation exists wherein hazardous conditions are imminent. This condition denotes a greater sense of danger than associated with "Increased" or "High Readiness" events. Actions could also be generated by severe weather warning information issued by the National Weather Service combined with factors making the event more imminent or dire.

1. Tropical Weather Threat: The evacuation decision period is nearing for an approaching system that may impact the local area. Readiness actions may include continuous situation monitoring, full activation of the EOC, recommending precautionary actions for special facilities, placing emergency personnel and equipment into position for emergency operations, and preparing public transportation resources for evacuation support.
2. Tornado Warning: Tornado[es] has been sighted close to a populated area or approaching such. Readiness actions may include taking immediate shelter and placing Damage Assessment teams on standby.
3. Flash Flood Warning: Flooding is occurring or imminent. Readiness actions may include evacuation, rescue team alerting, sheltering evacuees and other displaced persons, and continuous monitoring.
4. Mass Gathering: Civil Disorder is about to erupt into large scale and widespread violence. Readiness actions may include having all EMS units on standby, all law enforcement present and active, notification to the DDC that assistance may be needed and to keep them apprised, and continuous monitoring.

Declaration of a "Level 1" will generally require the initiation of the "Maximum Readiness" activities identified in each ESF as applicable.

Administration, Finance and Logistics

It is incumbent upon the Hidalgo County's agencies and partners to document and audit the flow of resources and personnel, as well as maintain standard operating procedures or general manuals that support and complement emergency functions that may arise during an emergency.

Hidalgo County maintains line of succession documentation within its component agencies' SOPs. Parties responsible for ESFs will have a line of succession drawn up for the primary responsible party attached within each ESF.

The line of succession for our Emergency Management Director is as follows:

1. Emergency Management Coordinator
2. County Judge Chief of Staff
3. Deputy EMC

Agreements and Contracts

Should local resources prove to be inadequate during an emergency, requests will be made for assistance from other local jurisdictions, other agencies, and industry in accordance with existing mutual-aid agreements and contracts and those agreements and contracts concluded during the emergency. Such assistance may include equipment, supplies, or personnel. All agreements will be entered into by authorized officials and should be in writing wherever possible. Agreements and contracts should identify the local officials authorized to request assistance pursuant to those documents.

In an effort to facilitate assistance pursuant to mutual aid agreements, our available resources are identified and are located/summarized at the Office of Emergency Management.

Agreements and contracts pertinent to emergency management that we are party to are summarized in.

Reports

If we are responsible for a release of hazardous materials of a type or quantity that must be reported to state and federal agencies, the department or agency responsible for the spill shall make the required report. See ESF 10, Oil Spill and Hazardous Materials Response, for more information. If the party for a reportable spill cannot be located, the Incident Commander shall ensure that the required reports are made.

An initial emergency report should be prepared and transmitted by the EOC when an on-going emergency incident appears likely to worsen and we may need assistance from peer governments or the State. A format for the construction for such a report can be obtained through the Texas Division of Emergency Management. The agency/official responsible for the initial report shall be designated as Hidalgo County Office of Emergency Management

Situation reports should be prepared and distributed daily by the EOC during disasters or major emergencies. A format for the construction for such a report can be obtained through the Texas Division of Emergency Management. The agency responsible for the development and distribution of the situation report shall be designated as Hidalgo County Office of Emergency Management.

As soon as possible, all local jurisdictions should begin gathering initial damage estimates. These figures need not be exact, but are necessary to complete the Disaster Summary Outline (DSO) as a basis for obtaining a Presidential Disaster Declaration. Event-specific DSO pin numbers are provided through District Coordinators or the SOC. DSOs should be re-submitted as costs change or are better estimated.

Other reports will be addressed in appendices or attachments as needed.

Records

Hidalgo County is responsible for establishing administrative controls necessary to manage the expenditure of funds and to provide reasonable accountability and justification for expenditures made to support emergency operations. This shall be done in accordance with the established local fiscal policies and standard costs accounting procedures.

The ICP and EOC shall maintain accurate logs recording key response activities. These may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Activation or deactivation of emergency facilities
- b. Emergency notifications to other local governments and to state and federal agencies

- c. Significant changes to the emergent situation
- d. Major commitments of resources or requests for additional resources from external sources
- e. Issuance of protective action recommendations to the public
- f. Evacuations
- g. Casualties
- h. Containment or termination of the incident

All departments and agencies shall maintain records summarizing the use of personnel, equipment and supplies during the response as compared to day-to-day incidents to obtain an estimate of annual emergency response costs that can be used in preparing future department or agency budgets.

For major emergencies or disasters all departments and agencies participating in the emergency response shall maintain detailed costs for emergency operations, to include:

- a. Personnel costs, especially overtime
- b. Equipment operations costs
- c. Costs for leased or rented equipment
- d. Costs for contract services to support emergency operations
- e. Costs of specialized supplies expended for emergency operations

These records may be used to recover costs from the responsible party or insurers or as a basis for requesting financial assistance for certain allowable response and recovery costs from the state and/or federal government. The Daily Activity Report form will

In order to continue normal governmental operations following an emergency situation or disaster, vital records must be protected. These include legal documents as well as property and tax records. The principle causes to damage to such are fire and water, therefore these essential records must be protected accordingly. Each agency responsible for a given ESF will include protection of vital records within its SOP.

Should these records suffer damage, Hidalgo County will seek professional assistance to preserve and restore them.

Training

It will be the responsibility of each county department to ensure that agency personnel are, in accordance with NIMS, at the level of training, credentialing, fitness, and/or capability required for any positions they are tasked to fill.

Consumer Protection

Consumer complaints regarding alleged illegal business practices often occur in the aftermath of disaster. Such complaints will be referred to District Attorney's Office who will pass such complaints to the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General.

Post Incident and Exercise Review

The County Judge is responsible for organizing and conducting a critique following the conclusion of a significant emergency event/incident or exercise. The After Action Report will entail both written and verbal input from all appropriate participants. An Improvement Plan will be developed based on the deficiencies identified and an individual, department, or agency will be assigned responsibility for correcting the deficiency and a due date shall be established for that action.

Disaster Assistance Requests

The governor is granted the authority, by [Tex. Gov. Code Ch. 418](#), to declare a state-level disaster. The presiding officer of the governing body of an incorporated city or a county or the chief administrative officer of a joint board is designated as the emergency management director for the officer's political subdivision and serves as the Governor's designated agent in the administration and supervision of duties under Chapter 418 ([Tex. Gov. Code §418.1015](#)). A local emergency management director may exercise the powers granted to the governor under this chapter on an appropriate local scale and may declare a local state of disaster.

Local Disaster Declaration

The chief elected official of a jurisdiction may declare a local state of disaster for the following reasons:

- To exercise extraordinary powers
- To activate preparedness, response and recovery aspects of any and all applicable local emergency management plans
- To provide additional liability protection to government agencies and special or volunteer emergency workers
- To formally request general assistance from the state and federal governments

According to [Tex. Gov. Code Ch. 418](#), a declaration of local disaster may not be continued or renewed for a period of more than seven days except with the consent of the governing body of the political subdivision.

1. The chief elected official is responsible for approving and promulgating this plan.
2. The chief elected official shall determine the distribution of this plan.
 - a. The actual distribution list should be attached to this plan as an attachment.
3. The basic plan should have a schedule for review.
 - a. The EMC may establish this schedule
4. This plan must be updated every five years, and updated in the record of changes
5. An organization chart for the emergency management structure should be attached
6. An organization chart for the incident command structure should be attached
7. A cross-walk for ESFs and responsible entities should be attached
8. A page of ESF assignments should be attached.
9. The agreements and contracts noted above should be attached.
10. Reference material regarding NIMS should be attached.

Plan Development and Maintenance

This section describes the process by which this document is maintained and updated.

Development

County Judge is responsible for approving and promulgating this plan.

Distribution of Planning Documents

The County Judge shall determine the distribution of this plan and its annexes. In general, copies of plans and annexes should be distributed to those individuals, departments, agencies, and organizations tasked in this document. Copies should be set aside for the EOC and other emergency facilities, as well.

This plan includes a list (Attachment 1) that indicates who receives copies of this plan and the ESFs. In general, those who receive an ESF should receive this plan, as this plan outlines basic operations concepts and our emergency management organization.

Review

This plan and ESFs shall be reviewed annually by

- Richard F. Cortez

. The County Judge will establish a schedule for this annual review.

Update

This plan is to be updated based upon deficiencies identified during actual or simulated situations or emergencies and when changes in threat hazards, resources, capabilities, or government structure occur.

This plan must be revised or updated by formal change at least every five years. Responsibility for revising or updating this plan is assigned to Emergency Management Coordinator. Responsibility for revising or updating the plan or ESFs is outlined in the Section titled Assignment of Responsibilities. For details on the methods of updating planning documents, refer to the Comprehensive Planning Guide or to the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

Revised documents will be provided to all entities tasked in those documents.

Section 418 of the Government Code provides that TDEM shall review local emergency management plans. The process for submitting new or updated planning documents is maintained by TDEM. The County Judge is responsible for submitting copies of planning documents to our local Disaster Coordinator or to TDEM directly.

Attachment 1: Distribution Lists

Example:

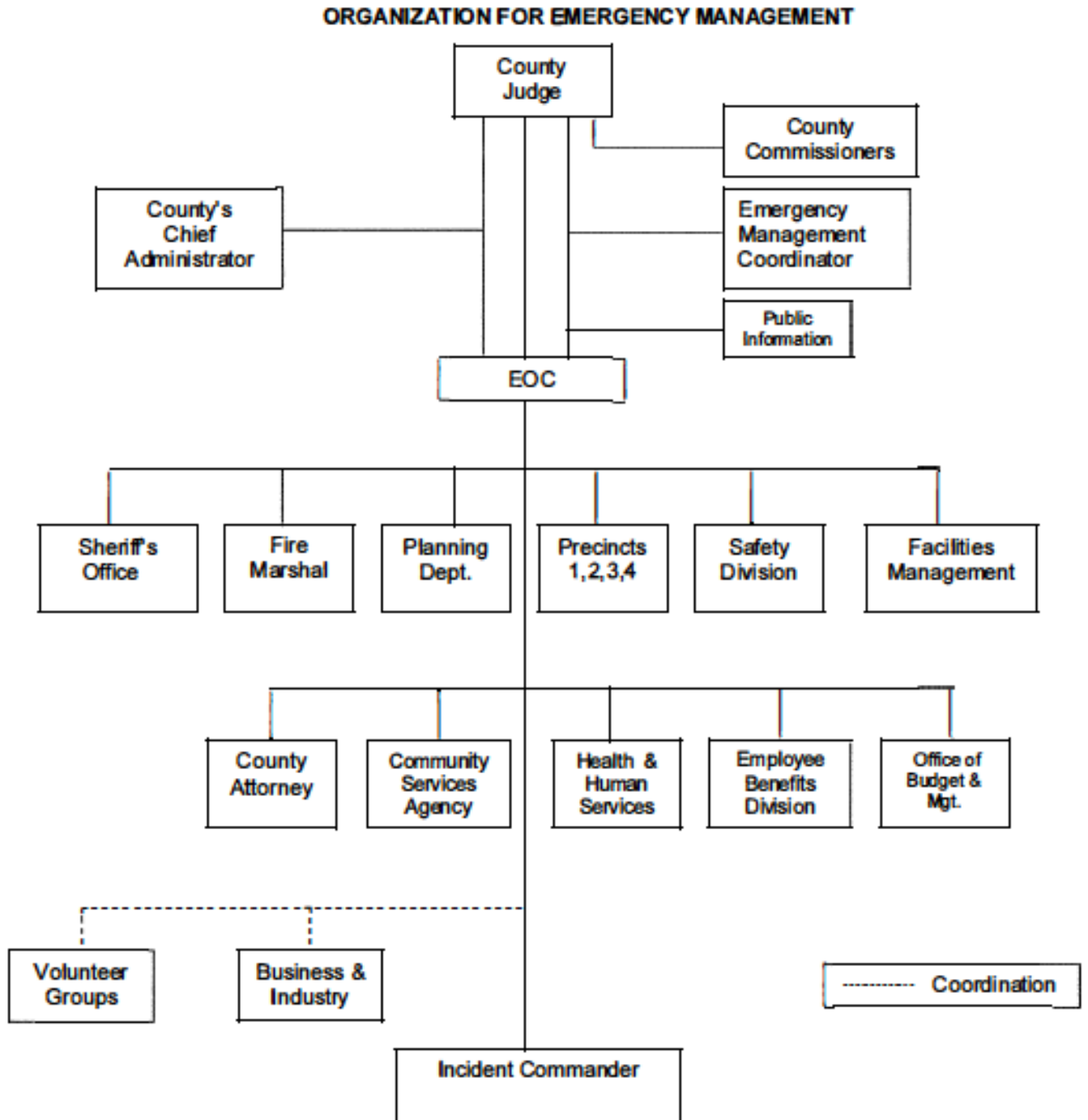
Jurisdiction/Agency	# of Digital Copies	# of Hard Copies
County Judge's Office	1	
Sheriff's Office	1	
Public Information	1	
Health Department	1	
District Attorney's Office	1	
Precinct 1	1	
Precinct 2	1	
Precinct 3	1	
Precinct 4	1	
Executive Office	1	
Budget & Management	1	
Community Services Agency	1	
Constable's 1,2,3,4,5	1	
Code Enforcement	1	
Safety Division	1	

Attachment 2: References

US Department of Homeland Security, National Response Framework

FEMA, Comprehensive Planning Guide 101

Attachment 3: Organization Chart for Emergencies



Attachment 4: ESF Responsibilities

	ESF-1 Transportation	ESF-2 Communication	ESF-3 Public Works	ESF-4 Firefighting	ESF-5 Information and Planning	ESF-6 Mass Care	ESF-7 Logistics	ESF-8 Public Health	ESF-9 Search and Rescue	ESF-10 Oil and Hazardous Materials	ESF-11 Agriculture and Natural Resources	ESF-12 Energy	ESF-13 Public Safety	ESF-14 Long Term Community Recovery	ESF-15 External Affairs
County Judge	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
OEM	P	S	S	S	P	S	P	S	S	S	S	P	S	P	S
Sheriff's Office	S	P	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	P	S	
Fire Marshal	S	S	S	P	S	S	S	S	P	P			S		
Constables 1,2,3,4,5	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S			S	S	
Precincts 1,2,3,4			P	S	S	S	S	S					S		
Facilities Mgmt.			S		S		S	S							
Health Dept.		S		S	S	S	S	P			P				
Community Services agency				S	S	P	S	S			S				S
Human Resources				S	S		S								
Budget Office					S	S	S								
District Attorney's Office					S		S								
Code Enforcement			S		S		S								
Safety Division			S		S		S								
Public Information															P

S	= Support responsibility for this ESF
P	= Primary agency or entity for this ESF

Attachment 5: ESF Assignments

Emergency Support Function	Responsible Entity
ESF-1 Transportation	Office of Emergency Management
ESF-2 Communication	Sheriff's Office
ESF-3 Public Works	Precincts 1,2,3,4,
ESF-4 Firefighting	Fire Marshal's Office
ESF-5 Information and Planning	Office of Emergency Management
ESF-6 Mass Care	Community Services Agency
ESF-7 Logistics	Office of Emergency Management
ESF-8 Public Health	Health & Human Services
ESF-9 Search and Rescue	Fire Marshal's Office
ESF-10 Oil and Hazardous Materials	Fire Marshal's Office
ESF-11 Agriculture and Natural Resources	Health & Human Services
ESF-12 Energy	Office of Emergency Management
ESF-13 Public Safety	Sheriff's Office
ESF-14 Long Term Community Recovery	Office of Emergency Management
ESF-15 External Affairs	Public Information Office

Attachment 6: Daily Activity Report

HIDALGO COUNTY
 Department of Budget & Management
Daily Activity Report
 Force Account Work

Incident Name	Worksite Location	Date
Employee Name	Employee Number	Dept./Precinct
Description of Work Performed at the worksite location		

Labor Hours	
Time In _____	Lunch Out _____
Time Out _____	Lunch In _____
Total Hours Physically Worked _____	

Equipment Used					
Equipment Description <small>(i.e. year, make, model, horsepower, etc.)</small>	Unit #	Hours Used	Office Use Only		
			Asset #	FEMA Rate Code	Rate

Acknowledgements	
Employee Signature	Date
Supervisor Signature	Date

Completed form must be turned in at end of every shift.

Office Use Only	
Identify Category based on work performed:	
<input type="checkbox"/> A - Debris Removal	<input type="checkbox"/> E - Buildings and Equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> B - Emergency Protective Measures	<input type="checkbox"/> F - Utilities
<input type="checkbox"/> C - Roads and Bridges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G - Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Other Items D -
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Control Facilities	

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Summary of Agreements and Contracts

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National Incident Management Summary

A. BACKGROUND

1. NIMS is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable to all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. This system is suitable across a wide range of incidents and hazard scenarios, regardless of size or complexity. It provides a flexible framework for all phases of incident management, as well as requirements for processes, procedures, and systems designed to improve interoperability.
2. NIMS is a multifaceted system that provides a national framework for preparing for, preventing, responding to, and recovering from domestic incidents.

B. COMPONENTS

1. Command and Management. The incident management structures employed by NIMS can be used to manage emergency incidents or non-emergency events such as celebrations. The system works equally well for small incidents and large-scale emergency situations. The system has built-in flexibility to grow or shrink depending on current needs. It is a standardized system, so personnel from a variety of agencies and geographic locations can be rapidly incorporated into a common management structure.

a. Incident Management System. A system that can be used to manage emergency incidents or non-emergency events such as celebrations.

1) FEATURES OF ICS

ICS has a number of features that work together to make it a real management system. Among the primary attributes of ICS are:

a) Common Terminology. ICS requires the use of common terminology, such as the use of standard titles for facilities and positions within an organization, to ensure efficient and clear communications.

b) Organizational Resources. All resources including personnel, facilities, major equipment, and supply items used to support incident management activities must be "typed" with respect to capability. This typing will minimize confusion and enhance interoperability.

c) Manageable Span of Control. Span of control should ideally vary from three to seven. Anything less or more requires expansion or consolidation of the organization.

Organizational Facilities. Common terminology is used to define incident facilities, the activities conducted at these facilities, and the organizational positions that can be found working there.

e) Use of Position Titles. All ICS positions have distinct titles.

f) Reliance on an Incident Action Plan. The incident action plan, which may be verbal or written, is intended to provide supervisory personnel a common understanding of the situation and direction for future action. The plan includes a statement of objectives, organizational description, assignments, and support material such as maps. Written plans are desirable when two or more jurisdictions are involved, when state and/or federal agencies are assisting local response personnel, or there has been significant turnover in the incident staff.

g) Integrated Communications. Integrated communications includes interfacing disparate communications as effectively as possible, planning for the use of all available systems and frequencies, and requiring the use of clear text in communications.

h) Accountability. ICS is based on an orderly chain of command, check-in for all responders, and only one supervisor for each responder.

2) UNIFIED COMMAND

a) Unified Command is a variant of ICS used when there is more than one agency or jurisdiction with responsibility for the incident or when personnel and equipment from a number of different agencies or jurisdictions are responding to it. This might occur when the incident site crosses jurisdictional boundaries or when an emergency situation involves matters for which state and/or federal agencies have regulatory responsibility or legal requirements.

b) ICS Unified Command is intended to integrate the efforts of multiple agencies and jurisdictions. The major change from a normal ICS structure is at the top. In a Unified command, senior representatives of each agency or jurisdiction responding to the incident collectively agree on objectives, priorities, and an overall strategy or strategies to accomplish objectives; approve a coordinated Incident Action Plan; and designate an Operations Section Chief. The Operations Section Chief is responsible for managing available resources to achieve objectives.

Agency and jurisdictional resources remain under the administrative control of their agencies or jurisdictions, but respond to mission assignments and direction provided by the Operations Section Chief based on the requirements of the Incident Action Plan.

3) AREA COMMAND

a) An Area Command is intended for situations where there are multiple incidents that are each being managed by an ICS organization or to oversee the management of large or multiple incidents to which several Incident Management Teams have been assigned. Area Command becomes Unified Area Command when incidents are multijurisdictional.

The organization of an Area Command is different from a Unified Command in that there is no operations section, since all operations are conducted on-scene, at the separate ICPs.

b. Multiagency Coordination Systems. Multiagency coordination systems may be required for incidents that require higher level resource management or information management. The components of multiagency coordination systems include facilities, equipment, EOCs, specific multiagency coordination entities, personnel, procedures, and communications; all of which are integrated into a common framework for coordinating and supporting incident management.

c. Public Information. The NIMS system fully integrates the ICS Joint Information System (JIS) and the Joint Information Center (JIC). The JIC is a physical location where public information staff involved in incident management activities can collocate to perform critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public affairs functions. More information on JICs can be obtained in the DHS National Incident Management System Plan, dated March 2004.

2. Preparedness. Preparedness activities include planning, training, and exercises as well as certification of response personnel, and equipment acquisition and certification. Activities would also include the creation of mutual aid agreements and Emergency Management Assistance Compacts. Any public information activities such as publication management would also be preparedness activities.

3. Resource Management. All resources, such as equipment and personnel, must be identified and typed. Systems for describing, inventorying, requesting, and tracking resources must also be established.

4. Communications and Information Management. Adherence to NIMS specified standards by all agencies ensures interoperability and compatibility in communications and information management.

5. Supporting Technologies. This would include any technologies that enhance the capabilities essential to implementing the NIMS. For instance, voice and data communication systems, resource tracking systems, or data display systems.

6. Ongoing Management and Maintenance. The NIMS Integration Center provides strategic direction and oversight in support of routine review and continual refinement of both the system and its components over the long term.

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