

**MODULE C7
CONCEPTS & PROCEDURES OF SEMS AT THE REGIONAL EOC**

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Note: Students should be provided the current REOC Operating Plan and Standard Operating Procedures including Position Responsibilities and Checklists

I. MODULE DESCRIPTION:

The goal of Module C7 is to provide the student with a basic understanding of the concepts and procedures for a Regional EOC via State OES. This Module covers activation criteria, purpose, scope and basic responsibilities, need for communications and coordination, and the common tasks of the five SEMS functions associated with this EOC. At the completion of the Module, the student should be able to achieve the minimum performance objectives listed, through knowledge, skills or abilities relating to the following topic areas:

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1. ACTIVATION CRITERIA & REQUIREMENT TO USE SEMS
2. GENERAL PURPOSE, SCOPE & BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES
3. REQUIREMENT FOR COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION
4. REQUIREMENT FOR MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION
5. STANDARDS AND MODELS FOR STAFFING, ORGANIZATIONS, LAYOUTS AND EOC SUPPORT ITEMS
6. NEED FOR SPECIFIC SOP AND CHECKLISTS

II. Module Content

A. SEMS Requirements for the Regional Level

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SEMS regulations require the regional level EOC to be activated and SEMS used when any operational area EOC within the mutual aid region is activated.

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) has the lead responsibility for SEMS at the regional level. However, an effective SEMS regional level requires the cooperative effort of all departments and agencies having a regional level role in emergencies. The requirement to use SEMS at the regional level applies to agencies which provide regional coordination of mutual aid and operate the various mutual aid systems which function within the state, and to state agencies that provide support for emergency response activities.

State OES is responsible for establishing the regional level EOC. OES shall identify the location of the regional level EOC to accommodate the needs of the operational area(s) served.

When the OES Regional EOC (REOC) is activated, communications and coordination shall be established with the operational areas within the region, the state level EOC, regional facilities responsible for discipline-specific mutual aid systems, and with department operations centers (DOCs) of other state agencies located within the boundaries of the mutual aid region. The latter could include DOCs which function as regional mutual aid system coordinators, (such as, CDF), as well as state agency "regional" operations centers for CALTRANS Districts, CHP Divisions, etc. Boundaries of state agency districts, divisions and regions may not correspond to those of the State's mutual aid regions. Coordination of fire and law enforcement resources shall be accomplished through their respective mutual aid regions.

The regional level shall use multi-agency or inter-agency coordination to facilitate decisions for overall regional level emergency response activities.

B. Activating the Regional EOC (REOC)

The REOC will be activated under any of the following conditions:

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- When any operational area EOC in the region is activated
- When ordered by the Regional Administrator (or designee) or higher authority
- When a local or state emergency is declared, and contact with the OES Regional Administrator (or designee) is not immediately possible

The Region should anticipate the activation of the operational area(s) and activate the REOC as soon as practical. SEMS regulations specify seven circumstances for activating the operational area EOC. These in effect become requirements for activating the REOC. The seven requirements are:

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1. A local government within the operational area has activated its EOC and requested activation of the operational area EOC to support their emergency operations.
2. Two or more cities within the operational area have declared or proclaimed a local emergency.
3. The county and one or more cities have declared or proclaimed a local emergency.
4. A city, city and county, or county has requested a governor's proclamation of a state of emergency.

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5. A state of emergency is proclaimed by the governor for the county or two or more cities within the operational area.
6. The operational area is requesting resources from outside its boundaries. This does not include resources used in normal day-to-day operations which are obtained through existing mutual aid agreements.
7. The operational area has received resource requests from outside its boundaries. This does not include resources used in normal day-to-day operations which are obtained through existing mutual aid agreements.

The Regional Administrator will maintain procedures for activating and staffing the REOC at levels appropriate to the situation. As part of the activation process, OES Agency Representatives will be sent to activated operational area EOCs.

Upon activation, the Regional Administrator will assume the position of REOC Director, and have responsibility for all state related functional activity within the REOC. During later phases of an emergency, the REOC Director authority may be delegated.

The REOC Director and all other emergency management level staff, with the exception of the field OES Agency Representatives, shall carry out their duties at the REOC location.

REVIEW CURRENT ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

REOC Activation Procedures

Three levels of activation are recommended.

C. Responsibilities and Roles of OES REOCs

1. Responsibilities

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- Ensure that an overall coordinating and information management system is in place for providing state support to local governments during an emergency. During emergencies, this is done by working through operational areas.
- Provide an organizational structure and the necessary communications to coordinate, and to provide information transfer between regional mutual aid systems which function in other state and non-state agencies and facilities.

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- Facilitate communications and coordination between affected operational areas within the region.
- Provide the communications and coordination link between operational areas and the state level of SEMS.
- Ensure and encourage consistency of operations between state agencies and local governments through the utilization of SEMS.

2. Operational Role

The REOC performs and/or supports a variety of activities at the time of the emergency. REOC activities can be direct with operational areas, or be supportive in terms of ensuring effective coordination through existing mutual aid systems. Overall, the operational role of the REOC is to:

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- Act as the State's primary point of contact for operational areas within the region
- Coordinate the regional response to disasters including collection, verification and evaluation of situation information and, for all resources dispatched through the Emergency Services Mutual Aid System, the allocation of available resources
- Coordinate mutual aid requests for emergency services within the region. (This includes the direct coordination of all mutual aid requests other than that provided through established discipline-specific systems such as the Disaster Medical, Law Enforcement, and Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid Systems)

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- Maintain liaison and coordination with OES Headquarters, and with state and federal agencies within or outside the region as required
- Provide assistance to state and local agencies through appropriate systems to support the protection and saving of life and property during emergencies
- Assist local governments in beginning recovery operations following disasters
- Assist and guide local jurisdictions in all phases of emergency management
- Receive and disseminate emergency alerts and warnings

3. Purchasing Authority, Procurement Policy and Mission Numbers

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Once an emergency has been declared, purchasing and mission number assignment authority will be delegated to the appropriate OES Administrative Region (REOC). OES headquarters will establish the conditions under which

authority will be delegated. The Regional Administrator (REOC Director) may delegate purchasing authority to the REOC Finance/Administration Section, and delegate mission number assignments to the Logistics Section.

During life-threatening or other time critical emergencies, resources will be procured from the closest available source(s). Unless otherwise defined by OES policy, in those situations where time is not of the essence, or life is not threatened, resources will be procured using the priority outlined below:

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1. Resources within the State inventory, i.e., state owned
2. Other Sources that may be obtained without direct cost to the State (may include donated goods and services)
3. Resources that may be leased or purchased within spending authorizations

D. REOC Organization

1. Functional Organization

SEMS Regulation (2403 (c)) requires that the regional level provide for all of the following functions within a REOC.

- Management
- Operations
- Planning/Intelligence
- Logistics
- Finance/Administration

To accommodate the requirement, a regional level organizational structure has been established. The following are primary functional positions at the REOC. With the exception of the REOC Director, all positions will be activated as required.

- REOC Director (Regional Administrator)
- Public Information
- Liaison
- Operations Section
- Planning/Intelligence Section
- Logistics Section
- Finance/Administration Section

The public information function, if subject to growth and expansion, should be established as a section or branch in the REOC to allow the capability for later activation of sub-elements within the function.

Primary functional responsibility is as follows:

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- REOC Director (Management) - Implements policy of the OES Director and appropriate government code, and coordinates joint efforts of governmental agencies and public and private organizations functioning at the REOC.
- Operations Section - Coordinates the activities of various functional branches which may be activated at the REOC to support operational areas.
- Planning/Intelligence Section - Collects, evaluates, and disseminates information; develops the REOC action plan in coordination with the other functions, and maintains documentation.

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- Logistics Section - Procures and provides facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials to meet the needs of operational area requests and to support REOC operations.
- Finance/Administration Section - Administers regional level purchasing authority, cost accounting and other financial activities and administrative tasks not assigned to other functions.
- Public Information - Develops regional level state public information releases, and coordinates public information and public affairs activities with the state EPI manager at the SOC.

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- Liaison - Provides coordination, and ensures adequate support is provided to incoming operational area and other agency representatives. Liaison will also assist the REOC Director in coordinating the assignment of regional field liaison teams sent to operational areas and/or other locations as necessary.

These are the primary functional elements to be established within the REOC. If Liaison and Public Information functions are not established, the responsibility for those functions rests with the REOC Director.

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A fully activated REOC organization is shown in Figure 3 in *student reference manual*.

While all functions must be capable of being represented in the REOC, there is no requirement that all functional positions be activated. Thus, the only organizational position that would require activation would be the REOC Director. The REOC Director is responsible for all primary and support functions until delegated to others.

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Functions may be organized within the REOC organization in various ways. An example of how to do this is shown in the following chart.

2. Organizational Span of Control

The REOC organization will expand (or contract) as necessary to meet the operational requirement. The hierarchy of organizational elements that can be developed as needed within the EOC organization is:

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- Director
 - Section
 - Branch
 - Group
 - Unit

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Personnel supervising REOC Sections will carry a position title of Section Chief. Persons supervising branches, groups, or units will have the title of coordinator unless otherwise designated.

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The span-of-control within the REOC organization should be maintained within the range of one supervisor for every three to seven positions. If the span of control exceeds seven, activation of another organizational level (e.g., Branch, Group, or Unit) should be considered. If the span of control is under three, consideration should be given to deactivating or consolidating organizational elements.

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Not all positions in the organization need be activated at the time of REOC activation. For example, a branch may be activated without first activating the section which contains the branch. Functional need and span of control are the primary considerations in organization development.

The duties of functional positions not activated will always be the responsibility of the next higher position in the organization. One person may also fill more than one functional assignment at a given time.

3. Information Transfer

As the Regional EOC organization grows, effective internal information transfer must take place. Two principles are essential to effective handling.

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- There is freedom within the organization to exchange information. Any person in any unit or organization may make contact with any other person to exchange information.
- Orders, directives, resource requests, and status changes must follow the REOC organization unless otherwise indicated in the REOC Action Plan.

4. REOC Staffing

The REOC Director will determine appropriate staffing for each activation based upon an assessment of the situation. REOC positions should be staffed by the most qualified available individuals in the function to be performed. Primary staff positions in the organization may be filled by individuals from other State agencies. Sub positions within the organization will be filled by qualified personnel independent of rank or agency affiliation.

It is recommended that staffing for full activations of the REOC should use pre designated State Inter-agency Response Teams. Teams will operate on a rotating "on-call" basis. Team composition will be established within regional plans. Teams and other supporting personnel may consist of personnel from the following sources.

- Primary OES Region
- Other OES Regions
- OES Headquarters
- Other State Agencies
- Emergency Managers Mutual Aid Responders
- Emergency Hires

REOC TEAM List

REVIEW CURRENT TEAMS ASSIGNMENT IF DEVELOPED]

5. REOC General Staff

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The Section Chiefs for Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, and Finance/Administration constitute the General Staff of the REOC. The REOC Director and General Staff work together as the REOC management team. The General Staff are responsible for:

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- overseeing the internal functioning of their section, and
- interacting with each other, the REOC Director, and other entities within the REOC to ensure the effective functioning of the REOC organization.

The REOC Director may wish to establish the functions of Liaison and Public Information at a section level in the REOC and to include the lead persons for these functions as members of the General Staff.

E. Multi-agency or Inter-agency Coordination at the Regional Level

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SEMS regulations require the use of multi-agency or inter-agency coordination at the regional level. Multi-agency or inter-agency coordination is an integral part of the REOC as discussed in Module C4. The REOC General Staff will constitute the primary group for development of REOC Action Plans and will normally be a part of any multi-agency or inter-agency coordination group.

The REOC Director may, as necessary, convene meetings of essential personnel for multi-agency or inter-agency coordination purposes. These can be at the General Staff, section or branch level and include other agencies as needed. Jurisdictional, discipline or agency participation in multi-agency or inter-agency meetings will be determined based on the subject areas and issues to be discussed.

An ad-hoc task force approach to specific problem areas may also be used as an effective application of multi-agency or inter-agency coordination. Under this approach, the REOC Director would assign key personnel from various functional areas or disciplines to work together to resolve a specific issue or problem.

F. Coordination and Communication with Regional Mutual Aid Coordinators

Several of the established mutual aid systems function from within their own discipline-specific facilities and communications networks. Therefore, the coordination at the regional level can take place in three ways.

- REOC and other regional mutual aid coordinators exchange information as required but are not located together at the same REOC.
- Mutual Aid Systems send liaison representatives to the REOC. This assures a closer working relationship.
- Mutual aid coordination is centralized at the REOC with functional branches established for some mutual aid coordination.

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The modes of interaction between the REOC and mutual aid coordinators are shown in *Exhibit 3 in the student reference manual*.

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There is no directive mandating which mode of operation will be carried out at the time of an emergency. Maintaining close coordination with established mutual aid systems is an essential requirement at the REOC. All discipline specific mutual aid systems which are not functioning from within the REOC have a responsibility to ensure that the REOC is fully informed on all matters regarding mutual aid operations. The best mode of operation should be determined by an agreement between the REOC Director and the Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator(s). In major disasters, mutual aid systems

should have representatives at the REOC to facilitate coordination and information flow.

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Resource requests beyond the normal inventory of an agency, or outside the resources within the inventory of an established mutual aid system, will be routed to the REOC Logistics Section for processing and order placement. Following this procedure reduces the possibility of duplicate orders, consolidates orders at a central order point, and effectively manages costs of the procurement process. A Resource Tracking function within the Logistics Section will monitor the resource ordering and distribution process.

G. Federal Representatives at the REOC

The REOC is the primary point of contact within SEMS for operational areas to communicate information and to request resources from the State. The REOC must be immediately able to respond to operational area requests. In some instances, joint State-Federal interaction will be necessary. This interaction is best accomplished by State and Federal counterparts working together at the same location.

In the event of a Federal Disaster Declaration, FEMA Emergency Support Functions (ESF) plan to be represented in the REOC. The same State and Federal functional elements should work closely together at the same location and in a combined functional environment. For example, State Planning /Intelligence and Federal information and planning functions have demonstrated the need for combined operation.

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REOC and FEMA Response Plan ESF relationships *are shown in Exhibit 4 in student reference manual.*

H. Role of the Operational Area Satellite System (OASIS) at the Region

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The Operational Area Satellite Information System (OASIS) is a satellite based communications system with a high frequency radio backup. OASIS provides the capability to rapidly transfer a wide variety of information reports between OASIS user agencies. In SEMS, OASIS can be viewed as both a communications network and information dissemination system linking the operational area, regional, and state levels.

OASIS will be a primary method of communications within SEMS. OASIS users include, OES State Headquarters, OES Regions and all State Operational Areas. The intent of OASIS is to provide disaster-resistant communications between the operational areas, state OES Regions, OES Headquarters and mobile state telecommunications units. The communications component of OASIS does not extend into the local government level of SEMS. However local governments are encouraged to use the OASIS forms in passing status, situation reports and resource requests to the operational area.

The communications components to the system include a satellite system in each county operational area linked to selected state, federal and local agencies. OASIS provides voice lines as well as data. OASIS also includes a high frequency radio back-up system between selected facilities.

The information processing component of OASIS contains some fifteen different kinds of functional forms which when fully implemented into OASIS system software, will provide a rapid and accurate means of transferring information between locations on the OASIS network.

I. EOC Standard Operating Procedures and Position Checklists

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Procedures and positions checklists provide guides for EOC staff to operate effectively and efficiently in the EOC. Checklists provide “mind joggers” to remind EOC staff of their duties. Procedures and checklists are especially helpful in getting off to a good start during the initial chaos of a disaster.

The most experienced and knowledgeable staff are not always immediately available when the emergency occurs. A well designed position checklist can be an invaluable tool for a less experienced person thrust into an EOC start-up situation.

Attachments to the REOC Operating Plan and Standard Operating Procedures include Position Responsibilities and Checklists for all REOC positions.

REOC Checklists

HAVE STUDENTS REVIEW THEIR EXISTING CHECKLISTS.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) may be developed to cover a number of items. Topics often addressed in SOPs include:

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- Setting up the EOC
- Message handling within the EOC
- Communications
- OASIS forms for reporting information
- Status boards and displays
- Documentation
- Resources and Contacts Lists
- Resource Request procedures

IDENTIFY EXISTING REOC PROCEDURES. DISCUSS IF ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES ARE NEEDED.

J. REOC Layout and Support Requirements

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The REOC should be physically arranged to facilitate coordination among all activated REOC elements. A common model for an EOC layout provides a central room, often called the operations room, in which all functional elements are located. In the central room, work stations for the organizational elements are grouped by the five SEMS functions. Communications and message centers and conference rooms may be in adjacent rooms. The overall layout should contribute to efficient exchange of information.

In this model, support areas such as eating, sleeping, first aid, sanitary and mechanic equipment facilities are located in nearby separate rooms. The overall facility layout should minimize interference between the functional elements and support areas, but should make the support areas convenient for EOC staff.

The actual configuration of a REOC will be constrained by the available physical space. In some cases, it may be necessary to place functional elements in separate rooms. The organizational elements should remain grouped by the five SEMS functions as much as possible. Care should be taken to avoid isolating a functional element from the rest of the REOC elements. A poorly planned REOC can inhibit coordination among organizational elements.

HAVE STUDENTS REVIEW EXISTING REOC LAYOUT . DISCUSS ITS CONSISTENCY WITH ABOVE PRINCIPLES.

Equipment and supplies should be sufficient for prolonged operation of the fully staffed REOC. Typical EOC supplies include:

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- Furniture-desks/tables and chairs for all positions,
conference tables and chairs
- Computers and printers
- Copiers
- Communications equipment
- EOC Forms and log books
- Emergency Generator
- Flashlights/emergency lighting
- Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) for computers
- TV, VCR, AM/FM Radio,
- Displays, maps, and white boards

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- Administrative supplies and office equipment (pens,
pencils, staplers and staples, etc.)
- Food Supply
- Kitchen equipment and supplies
- First Aid and Sanitary supplies
- Blankets and other items for sleeping area
- Janitorial supplies