

**MODULE C8**  
**CONCEPTS & PROCEDURES OF SEMS AT THE STATE LEVEL EOC**

**STUDENT REFERENCE MANUAL**

**I. MODULE DESCRIPTION:**

The goal of Module C8 is to provide the student with a basic understanding of the concepts and procedures for a State level 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:

1. ACTIVATION CRITERIA & REQUIREMENT TO USE SEMS
2. AGENCY RESPONSIBLE TO TAKE LEAD AT STATE LEVEL EOC
3. GENERAL PURPOSE, SCOPE & BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES
4. REQUIREMENT FOR COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION
5. REQUIREMENT FOR MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION
6. SOC STAFFING, ORGANIZATION, LAYOUTS AND SUPPORT ITEMS
7. NEED FOR SPECIFIC SOP AND CHECKLISTS

## **II. Module content**

### **A. SEMS Requirements for the State Level**

All state agencies and departments are required by law to use SEMS. SEMS regulations define specific requirements for the state level.

SEMS regulations require the state level EOC to be activated and SEMS used when any regional level EOC is activated and when the Governor proclaims a state of emergency, earthquake prediction or volcanic prediction.

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) has the lead responsibility for SEMS at the state level. OES is responsible for establishing the state level EOC. However, an effective SEMS state level requires a cooperative effort of all departments and agencies having a state level role in emergencies. The requirement to use SEMS at the state level applies to agencies which provide state level 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.

When the OES state level EOC is activated, communications and coordination shall be established with the the regional level EOC(s), state level department operations centers, and federal emergency response agencies. Coordination of fire and law enforcement resources shall be accomplished through their respective mutual aid systems.

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

### **B. Role of the State Level in SEMS**

#### **1. General Role**

The State is one of the five designated levels in the SEMS organization. The State level manages state resources in response to the emergency needs of the other levels, manages and coordinates mutual aid among the mutual aid regions, and between the regional level and state level, and serves as the coordination and communication link with the federal disaster response system.

#### **2. State Operations Center and Department Operations Centers**

Operations of the state level under SEMS are conducted from the State Operations Center (SOC) and are under the management of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES). The SOC is the state level EOC.

Several state agencies maintain separate headquarters level operations centers which are used during periods of emergency response. Under SEMS, these would be classified as department operations centers (DOCs). A DOC is a facility that may be used by a distinct discipline at all SEMS levels above the field response level. The State Operations Center (SOC) and state agency DOCs must provide for the primary SEMS functions of management, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics and finance/administration.

DOCs of state agencies may, during an emergency be in direct contact with their own field and/or regional operations centers, with OES REOCs, and with the SOC.

### **3. General Concept of Operations**

Under SEMS, every effort is made to concentrate emergency response functions at the lowest level which will ensure operational effectiveness. Wherever possible, direct State response coordination with mutual aid regions and operational areas will be maintained at the State OES Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC ) level.

The SOC will ensure the overall effectiveness of the State's Standardized Emergency Management System. During an emergency, the SOC plays a primary role in assisting the Governor in carrying out State emergency responsibilities. This role is carried out by performance of the several primary response functions as required by the situation:

### **4. Major Responsibilities of the State Operations Center**

- a. Ensure that all State and Regional response elements of the State's Standardized Emergency Management System are activated as the emergency situation requires, function effectively, and are maintained at the level necessary for the response.
- b. Support the Regions, state agencies, and other entities in establishing short-term recovery operations following disasters.

### **5. Primary Response Functions of the State Operations Center**

- a. Act as overall state coordinator in the event of simultaneous multi-regional disasters such as earthquakes, fires, or floods. In this situation, provide inter-regional policy direction and coordination for emergencies involving more than one REOC activation. Monitor and facilitate inter-regional communications and coordination issues.
- b. Compile, authenticate, and make available summary disaster status information obtained from all sources, in the form of Situation Reports to the Governor's office, the legislature, state agency headquarters, media and others as appropriate.
- c. Act as the state's initial response entity until the appropriate REOCs are activated and assume local management of their operational response functions. Maintain control

and status of mission numbers and purchasing authority until these functions are assumed by the REOC in the affected area.

- d. Provide on-going inter-agency coordination with the DOC headquarters of all state agencies involved in the response effort to ensure adequate statewide mobilization and allocation of state assets. This is typically accomplished through state Agency Representatives assigned to the SOC.
- e. Provide necessary coordination with and between established statewide mutual aid systems at the state headquarters level.
- f. Manage the state's Emergency Public Information program.
- g. Provide and maintain state headquarters linkage and inter-agency coordination with the Federal Response System. This includes requesting appropriate assignments of federal ESFs at both the SOC and REOC to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- h. Assist in the planning for short-term recovery, and assist State agencies, and REOCs in developing and coordinating recovery action plans.

## **C. Activation of The State Operations Center (SOC)**

### **1. Requirement for Activation**

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

- A regional level EOC (REOC) is activated
- The governor's proclamation of a state of emergency
- The governor's proclamation of an earthquake or volcanic prediction

A REOC must be activated whenever an operational area EOC is activated. Operational areas will be activated under many different circumstances that will require varying levels of regional and state level support.

### **2. Levels of Activation**

The level of activation, and the associated staffing and organizational development of the SOC will depend on:

- The nature, scope and expected duration of the emergency
- The extent of activation at other SEMS levels
- Functions needed to support REOCs and State Level activities.

Activation of the SOC will require that communications and coordination be established with:

- Affected Regional Emergency Operations Centers (REOCs)
- Department Operations Centers (DOC's) of state agencies
- Federal emergency response agencies

Three levels of activation are recommended at the State SOC.

#### Level One - Minimum Activation

At a minimum, this level would consist of a person functioning as the SOC Director. In addition, one or more Section Chiefs, the Situation Status and Analysis Unit in the Planning/Intelligence Section, the Communications Unit from the Logistics Section, or other units may also be activated if required at this level. SEMS primary functions will be the responsibility of the SOC Director until they are activated.

Level One Activation:

- SOC Director (required)
- General Staff (Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, Finance/Administration)
- Situation Status and Analysis Unit
- Communications Unit

#### Level Two - Mid Level Activation

A Level Two activation would normally be achieved as an increase from Level One or a decrease from Level Three. A Level Two activation would initially activate each functional element of the organization at a minimum level of staffing. One person may function in more than one capacity. The SOC Director and the General Staff, will determine the level of activation required, and demobilize functions or add additional staff to functions based upon event considerations. State Agency Representatives to the SOC would be required under Level Two.

#### Level Three - Full Activation

All functional elements are represented at full staffing. A Level Three activation would also include State and Federal declarations with appropriate Federal Emergency Support Function (ESF) representation at the REOC.

## D. Organization of the SOC

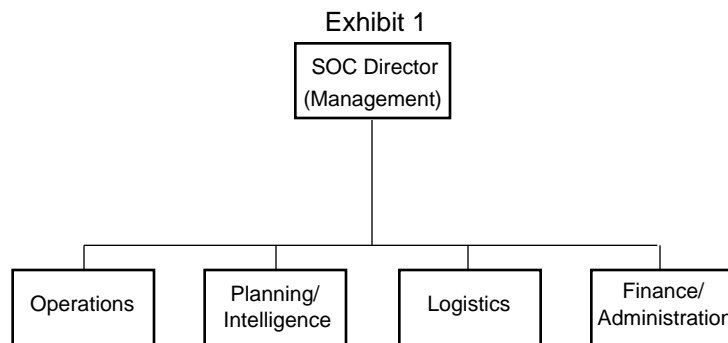
### 1. Functional organization

The SOC will be organized around the five primary functions of:

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

Under the SEMS Regulation §2403(c), these five functions must be provided for at the state level.

That basic organization is shown below.



To the extent feasible and required, the SOC organization will mirror the emergency organizations established at REOCs.

Note that under SEMS, only those functional elements that are required need to be activated. Duties of functions not activated will be accomplished by the next higher element in the organization.

Primary functional responsibility is as follows:

- SOC Director (Management) - Implements the policy of the OES Director and appropriate government code. Coordinates the joint efforts of governmental agencies and public and private organizations functioning at the state level.
- Operations Section - Coordinates the activities of various functional branches which may be activated at the SOC, which have an operational response role to support REOCs.
- Planning/Intelligence Section - Collects, evaluates, and disseminates information; develops the state level Situation Report, develops the SOC Action Plan in coordination with the other functions, and maintains documentation.

- Logistics Section - Procures and provides facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials to meet the needs of REOC requests to the SOC and to support SOC and REOC logistic activities.
- Finance/Administration Section - Administers SOC and State regional level purchasing authority, cost accounting and other financial activities and administrative tasks not assigned to other functions.
- Information and Public Affairs Section - Manages the state's Emergency Public Information program, and coordinates public information and public affairs activities between involved agencies.
- Liaison Coordinator- Ensures that SOC coordination, and support is provided to incoming State, Federal and other agency representatives.

These are the primary functional elements to be established at the SOC. If the Liaison Coordinator function is not established, the responsibility for that function performance rests with the SOC Director. A fully activated SOC organization is shown in the following Exhibit 2.

While all functions must be capable of being represented in the SOC, there is no requirement that all functional positions be activated. A basic principle of SEMS at all levels, is that functional elements need only be activated as necessary, and that the responsibility for any function not activated will reside at the next higher element.

## **2. Organizational Span of Control**

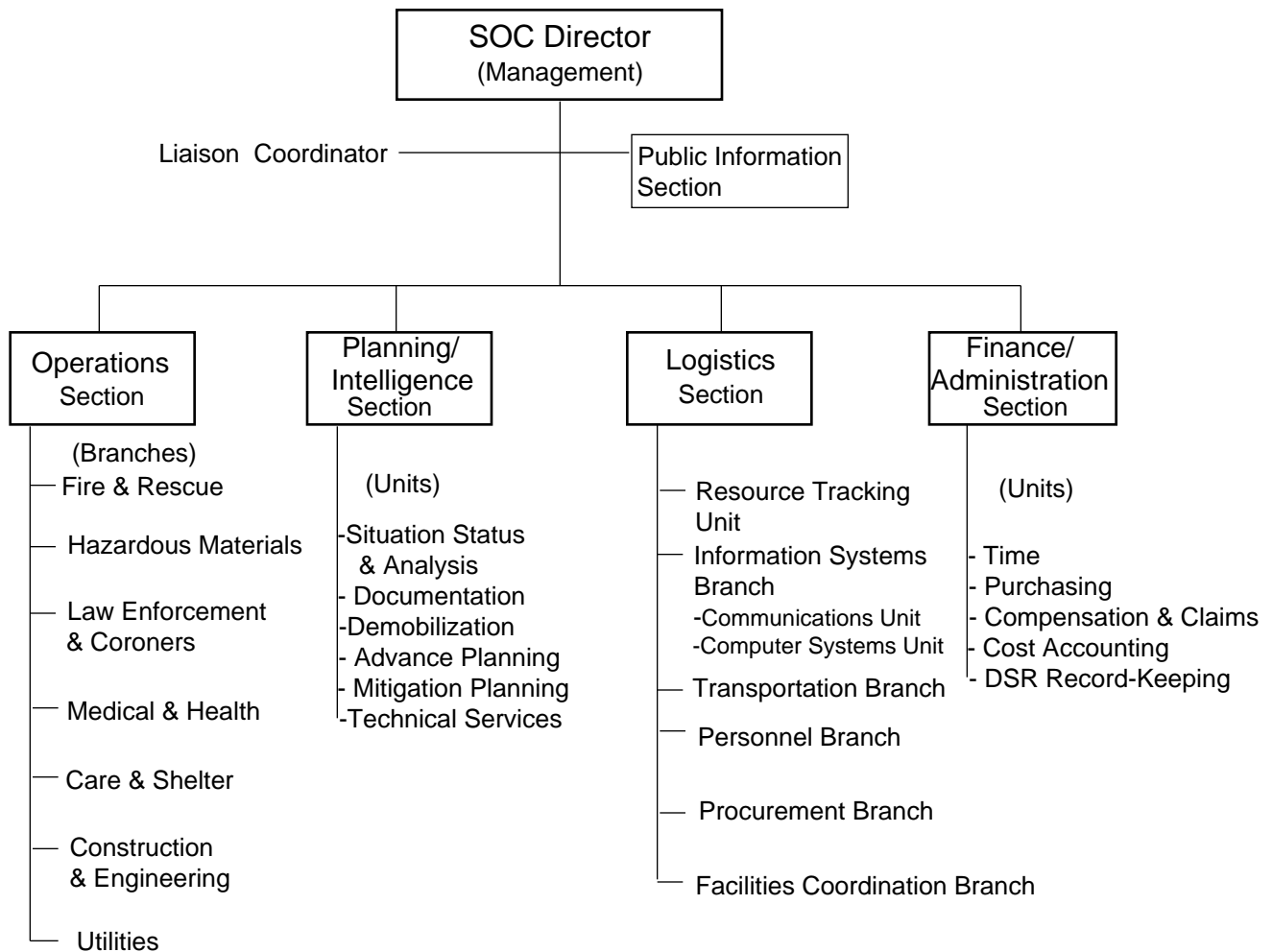
The SOC organization will expand (or contract) as necessary to meet the operational requirement. The hierarchy of organizational elements that can be developed as needed within the EOC organization is:

- Director
  - Section
    - Branch
      - Group
        - Unit

Personnel supervising SOC Sections will carry a position title of Section Chief. Lead persons for branches, groups, and units will have the position title of Coordinator unless otherwise designated.

Exhibit 2

## SOC Organization



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

Not all positions in the organization need be activated at the time of an SOC 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 SOC 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.

The extent of the functions to be performed and the necessary organization at the SOC will be dictated by the needs of the event, and the requirements for interactions with the involved REOC(s) and Federal Emergency Support Functions. As expressed in the



concept of operations, the primary State involvement will be directed at the regional level.

### **3. SOC Staffing**

Staffing levels for SOC activations will be established in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The SOC Director will determine appropriate staffing for each activation based upon an assessment of the current and projected situation. SOC 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 qualified individuals from other State agencies if desired or required. 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 SOC should use pre designated State Inter-agency Response Teams. Teams will operate on a rotating "on-call" basis. Team composition will be established in SOC plans and procedures. Teams and other supporting personnel may consist of personnel from the following sources.

- OES Headquarters
- Unaffected OES Regions
- Other State Agencies
- Emergency Managers Mutual Aid Responders

### **4. SOC General Staff**

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

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

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

### **E. Multi-agency or Inter-agency Coordination at the State level**

Multi-agency or inter-agency coordination is an integral part of both the SOC organization and the procedures which function within the SOC. The SOC General Staff

will serve as the primary group responsible for development of SOC Action Plans and will normally be a part of any multi-agency or inter-agency coordination group.

The SOC Director may convene meetings of essential personnel for multi or inter agency coordination purposes as required. These can be at the General Staff, section or branch level and include other agencies.

An ad-hoc task force may also be used as an effective application of multi-agency or inter-agency coordination to solve specific problems at the SOC. The SOC Director would assign key personnel from various functional areas or disciplines to work together on a task force. Agency Representatives from other state agencies, federal agencies, volunteer agencies, utilities etc. may be represented at the SOC to help facilitate the statewide response effort. Some or all of these representatives may, from time to time, be put into multi or inter agency coordination groups to solve special problems. Subject areas and discussion issues will determine participation.

#### **F. Federal Representation at the SOC**

The Regional EOC (REOC) will be the primary point of contact within SEMS for operational areas. The REOC must be able to immediately respond to operational area resource requests and information needs. In some cases, accomplishing this will require a joint state-federal interaction which can best be accomplished if state and federal counterpart organizations are working together at the same location.

It is planned that the REOC will be the primary point of coordination with Federal ESFs during a major disaster. FEMA has stated that in the event of a Federal Declaration, Emergency Support Functions (ESF) activated under the Federal Response Plan in support of the state will be represented at the REOC.

Federal ESF functions may also be located at the SOC. This could occur under at least two situations.

- The SOC is the primary state response entity.
- Certain overall state coordination functions are best performed at the SOC and require federal ESF involvement.

#### **G. Role of the Operational Area Satellite System (OASIS) at the SOC**

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 three of the five SEMS organizational levels.

OASIS will be a primary method of communications within SEMS. OASIS users include, OES State Headquarters, OES Regions, all Operational Areas and several state

agencies. 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 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 which is 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 fifteen different 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.

Additional information on OASIS may be found in OASIS documentation.

## **H. SOC Standard Operating Procedures, Position Checklists, Layout, and Support**

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and positions checklists provide guides for SOC staff to operate effectively and efficiently. Checklists provide “mind joggers” to remind SOC 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 SOC start-up situation.

OES maintains SOPs for the SOC including Position Responsibilities and Checklists for all SOC positions.

OES maintains the SOC at its headquarters facility on Meadowview Road in Sacramento. SOC staff function primarily from a large central room with the State Warning Center and OES communications adjacent. In a major disaster, some SOC staff function from other parts of the facility.

OES is responsible for communications and other basic equipment and supply needs of the SOC. State lead agencies for functions are responsible for function-specific information, forms and support requirements.