Part I. System Description

Section F

State Level

1. Role of the State Level in SEMS

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 other levels; manages and coordinates mutual aid among 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.

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).

Other state agencies having an emergency response role must also operate under SEMS. Several of these agencies maintain separate operations centers at the headquarters level which are used during periods of emergency response. Under SEMS, these would be classified as Department Operating Centers (DOCs). A DOC is an EOC used by a distinct discipline, and may be used at all SEMS levels above the field response level. The State's 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.

A. 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:

B. Major Responsibilities of the State Operations Center (SOC)

1. 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.

2. Support the Regions, state agencies, and other entities in establishing short-term recovery operations following disasters.

C. Primary Response Functions of the State Operations Center

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Provide necessary coordination with and between established statewide mutual aid systems at the state headquarters level.

6. Manage the state's Emergency Public Information program.

7. 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.

8. Assist in the planning for short-term recovery, and assist State agencies, and REOCs in developing and coordinating recovery action plans.
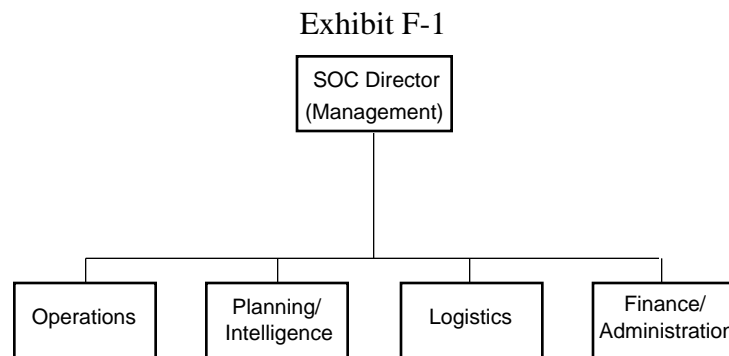
2. Organization of the SOC

The SOC will be organized around the five primary SEMS 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.

The organization structure is shown below.

Exhibit F-1

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            ┌─────────────────┐
            │  SOC Director   │
            │  (Management)   │
            └─────────────────┘
                     │
   ┌──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│Operations│ │Planning/ │ │Logistics │ │  Finance/    │
│          │ │Intelligence│ │         │ │Administration│
└──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────────┘
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The SOC organization will mirror the emergency organization established at REOCs unless extenuating circumstances exist.

Under SEMS, only those functional elements that are needed are activated at the SOC. Duties of functions not activated will be done by the next higher level 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.

- <u>Finance/Administration Section</u> - Administers SOC and State regional level purchasing authority, cost accounting and other financial activities and administrative tasks not assigned to other functions.

- <u>Information and Public Affairs Section</u> - Manages the state's Emergency Public Information program, and coordinates public information and public affairs activities between involved agencies.

- <u>Liaison</u> Coordinator- Ensures that SOC coordination, and support is provided to incoming State, Federal and other agency representatives.

Section Chiefs constitute the SOC General Staff. The SOC Director and General Staff function as a REOC management team. If the Liaison and Information and Public Affairs functions are not established, the responsibility for those functions rests with the SOC Director.

The functions proposed for the SOC will define the organizational elements required to perform the functions. While it is desirable to have organizational consistency between the SOC, Region and other SEMS levels, the primary organizational consideration should be centered on functional need.

All functions must be capable of being represented in the SOC. However, there is no requirement that all functional positions be activated.
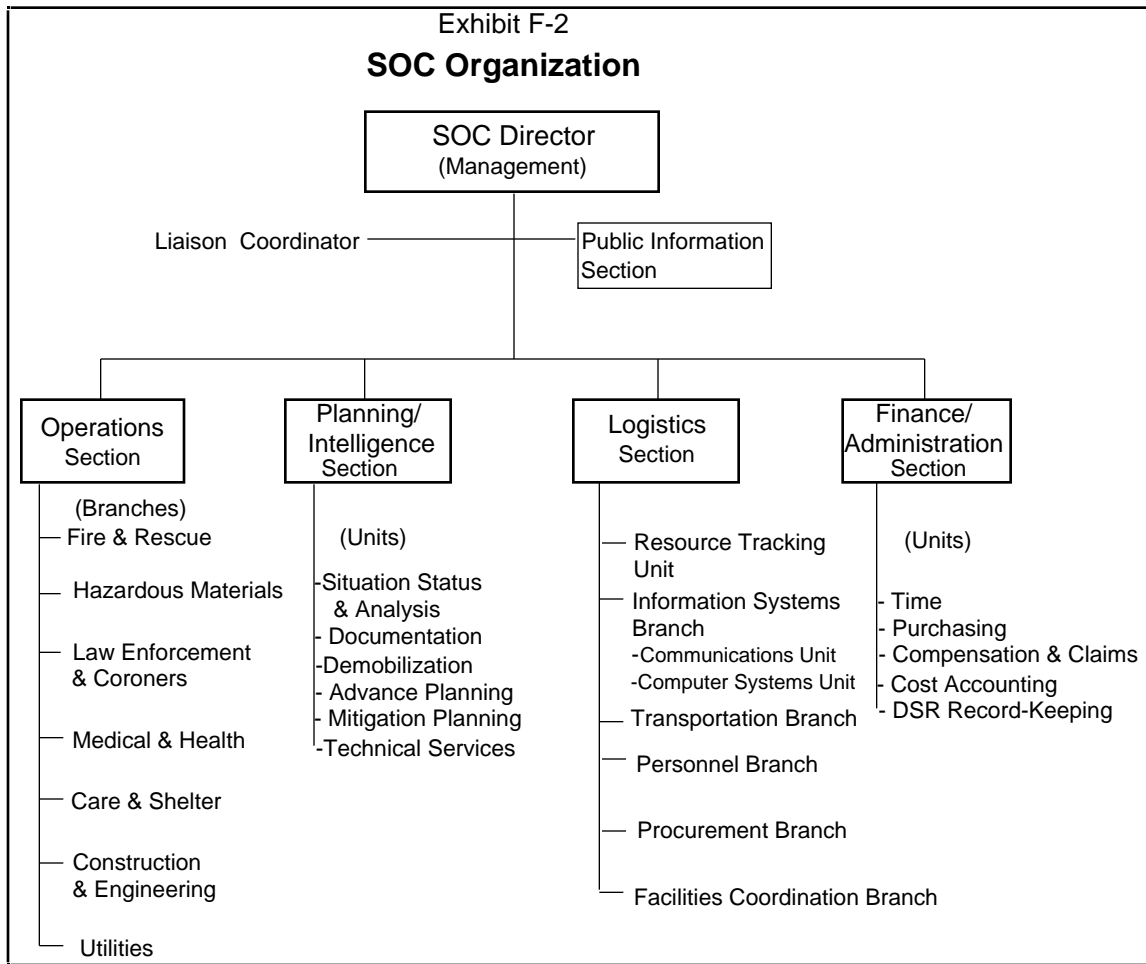
A fully activated SOC EOC organization is shown in Exhibit F-2.

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

Exhibit F-2
SOC Organization

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                        SOC Director
                        (Management)

Liaison  Coordinator ──────── Public Information
                              Section

   ┌────────────┬──────────────────┬──────────────────┐
Operations    Planning/         Logistics          Finance/
Section       Intelligence      Section            Administration
              Section                              Section

(Branches)                                         (Units)
─ Fire & Rescue    (Units)       ── Resource Tracking
                                    Unit            ─ Time
─ Hazardous       -Situation Status ── Information Systems  ─ Purchasing
  Materials        & Analysis        Branch            ─ Compensation & Claims
                  - Documentation    -Communications Unit  ─ Cost Accounting
─ Law Enforcement -Demobilization    -Computer Systems Unit ─ DSR Record-Keeping
  & Coroners      - Advance Planning
                  - Mitigation Planning ── Transportation Branch
─ Medical & Health -Technical Services
                                   ─ Personnel Branch

─ Care & Shelter
                                   ─ Procurement Branch

─ Construction
  & Engineering
                                   ─ Facilities Coordination Branch
─ Utilities
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Personnel supervising SOC Sections will carry a position title of Section Chief. The title of coordinator will be used at other organizational levels unless otherwise designated.

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 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.

Not all positions in the organization need to 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. Also, one person may assume more than one functional assignment at a given time. For Example, one person may be simultaneously in charge of two logistics units. It is not recommended that units be combined as this may create confusion and internal staffing problems if they are to be separated at a later time.

Functions 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.   Activation of the State Operations Center (SOC)

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

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 (DOCs) 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.

4. 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 level based upon an assessment of the current and projected situation. SOC positions should be staffed by the available individuals most qualified in the function to be performed. Primary staff positions in the organization may be filled by qualified individuals from other State agencies if 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 State SOC operating plans. 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

5. Coordination with the Region

The level of coordination required with the REOC will be determined by the type of emergency, the ability of the REOC to perform assigned functions, and the level of required interaction between the two state levels.

While the REOC will have primary responsibility for State interaction with affected Operational Areas, the State SOC will perform the following activities which require close interaction with the REOC.

1. Prepare and release the State Situation Report. Information for this report will be obtained from regional situation reports, conference calls, reports from other state agencies, and information received from any other valid information sources as determined by OES. It will be the responsibility of the SOC to collect and authenticate material from all available sources, and to compile and release Situation Reports. Extensive coordination with functional elements within the REOC serving the affected area will be required as well as information received from activated but non-affected REOCs.

2. Develop state level public information announcements. In any major disaster which involves multiple state agencies, it is essential that there be coordination of the release of public information about the state response. Much of this information will be obtained from REOC Situation Reports, from coordination with REOC Information Sections, and from information and public affairs officers of assisting state agencies.

3. Coordinate the involvement of all activated mutual aid systems to ensure they are functioning effectively, and sharing information, and to ensure there are no resource ordering duplications taking place through the several mutual aid channels.

4. Ensure REOC-SOC coordination takes place when federal Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) are established at more than one REOC location or are required at both SOC and REOCs. Coordinate the State and Federal interactions to ensure most effective application and use of federal response system.

6. 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.

7. State and Federal Interactions

The Regional EOC (REOC) is the primary point of contact within SEMS for operational areas to provide status information and make resource requests to the state. The REOC must be immediately able to 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.

In the event of a Federal Disaster Declaration, FEMA ESFs activated under the Federal Response Plan 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.

● Some state coordination functions are best performed at the SOC and require federal ESF involvement.

State functional elements and counterpart Federal ESF personnel should work closely together at the same location when possible. Some state-federal functions e.g., (state) Planning/Intelligence -(federal) Information and Planning have demonstrated the desirability of a combined operation.

8. Action Planning at the SOC

Action planning at the SOC, is based around an operational period. The length of the operational period is determined by first establishing a set of priority actions that must be performed. A reasonable time frame for accomplishing those actions is then established. Actions requiring the longest time period generally will define the length of the operational period. Typically, operational periods at the beginning of an emergency are short, sometimes only a few hours. As the emergency progresses, operational periods may be longer, but usually should not exceed twenty-four hours.

There is no requirement to have similar length operational periods at SOC and REOC levels. The length of the operational period should always be determined around the time required to perform desired objectives.

The Initial SOC Action Plan may be a verbal plan put together in the first hour after SOC activation. It is usually prepared by the SOC Director and the General Staff. Subsequent plans should be in writing, and follow an established format.

SOC action planning need not be a complex process. The Action Plan should generally cover the following elements:

● Operational Period Designation - (The time frame within which the action plan will be in effect.)

● Statement of current priorities

● Listing of objectives to be accomplished (should address the priorities and be measurable in some way).

● Statement of strategy to achieve the objectives. (Identify if there is more than one way to accomplish the objectives, and which method is preferred.)

● Assignments necessary to implement the strategy

● Organizational elements to be activated to support the assignments. (Also may list organizational elements that will be deactivated during or at the end of the period.)

● Logistical or other technical support required

A more detailed discussion of Action Planning is covered in Guidelines Part III Supporting Documents. Action Planning is also covered in more detail in the EOC Level Training Course.

9. 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.