

Part II. Planning and Developing SEMS

Section E

State Level

1. Responsibility for SEMS Planning

The development of the SEMS state level requires a cooperative effort of all departments and agencies having a role at the state level in emergencies. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) has the lead responsibility for planning and developing SEMS at the state level. OES, other state departments and agencies, and State Mutual Aid Coordinators should work cooperatively to develop effective emergency management at the state level.

OES staff at the state level are responsible for:

- Communicating information on SEMS requirements and guidelines
- Coordinating development of the SEMS state level among state departments and agencies that have a emergency responsibilities
- Coordinating with designated State Mutual Aid Coordinators on development of SEMS
- Coordinating with OES Regional Administrators on statewide development of SEMS
- Maintaining the State Operations Center (SOC)
- Maintaining the State Emergency Plan and supporting plans consistent with SEMS
- Maintaining standard operating procedures for the SOC consistent with SEMS
- Designating and training SOC staff
- Participating in, and supporting the SEMS Maintenance System

State agencies with emergency responsibilities as identified in the State Emergency Plan should:

- Cooperate with OES on development of SEMS at the state level

- Incorporate SEMS functions and features into their state level department operations center
- Update their emergency plans and procedures to be consistent with SEMS
- Ensure that regional level elements of the agency incorporate SEMS into their department operations centers and coordinate with the OES Regional Administrator as needed (See Guidelines Part II.C.)
- Ensure that ICS is used by the agency for field response (See Guidelines Part II.B.)
- Ensure that SEMS training is received by all agency personnel who have emergency assignments, including personnel assigned to the SOC, department operations centers, and field response

2. State Emergency Plan and Related Plans

OES is responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan. OES intends to review and update the State Emergency Plan for consistency with SEMS. While the multi-hazard functional approach in the current plan is generally compatible with SEMS, an update of the plan to clearly state the relationship with SEMS is needed.

There are a number of state supporting plans that will be reviewed and updated for consistency with SEMS. Several state contingency plans, developed prior to SEMS, provide for response to specific situations such as nuclear power plant accidents, volcanic eruptions, catastrophic earthquakes, and oil spills. These plans need to be updated to reflect use of SEMS.

Some of the contingency plans provide for the activation of special facilities near the disaster site from which state officials will coordinate the response effort, in some cases co-located with local or federal officials. Updates of these plans will clarify the relationship of these forward deployments to the REOC and SOC. Depending on the plan, these forward deployments could be considered:

- OES Agency Representative or teams reporting back to the REOC (in most of the plans the role is more than liaison)
- Multi-agency or inter-agency coordination groups
- Alternate REOC facilities to be used for certain contingencies
- Joint state-local EOCs to be used as alternates to the REOC for certain contingencies

3. State Operations Center

OES is responsible under SEMS for establishing the state level EOC which is the State Operations Center (SOC). To serve effectively as the state level EOC, the SOC should have:

- Sufficient work space to accommodate OES and other agency staff for state level coordination functions
- Sufficient work space in the primary SOC or the ability to expand the primary or an alternate SOC to accommodate colocated Federal ESFs in the event of multi-region major disasters or when functioning as an alternate REOC.
- Procedures for setup and internal operations.
- Communications links with:
 - Governor
 - Regional Emergency Operations Centers
 - State Mutual Aid Coordinators
 - State level department operations centers (DOCs) of state agencies
 - State level coordination centers of volunteer and private agencies with major roles in the emergency response
 - FEMA Region 9
 - Operational Areas (in order to provide backup to REOC or serve as an alternate REOC)
- Emergency power
- Pre-stocked supplies and forms for an extended period of operation

4. SOC Standard Operating Procedures

A corollary OES responsibility is maintaining SOC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The current SOC SOP will be reviewed and updated for consistency with SEMS. The SOC SOP will provide for:

- A description of the role of the SOC
- Activation criteria and procedures consistent with SEMS regulations
- SOC organization based on the five SEMS functions
- Designated SOC staffing
- Internal procedures incorporating SEMS features

- Inter-agency or multi-agency coordination
- Position Checklists

5. Training

All personnel who will be staffing positions in the SOC must maintain minimum training competencies pursuant to the approved course of instruction. The training should be provided to primary and alternate SOC staff. Training should be initiated as soon as feasible after SOC staff are designated. Provisions should be made for an on-going training program to accommodate personnel changes. Personnel involved in coordinating mutual aid or staffing department operations centers at the state level also must maintain minimum training competencies and should receive SEMS training as soon as feasible.

Approved SEMS Introductory and EOC Courses are available for personnel who will perform a SEMS function in a EOC or DOC. Minimum training competencies are identified in the approved SEMS courses as performance objectives. OES will provide the approved EOC SEMS course for designated SOC staff. State emergency response agencies are responsible for training their state level personnel. Agencies using an alternate training course should be able to demonstrate that the required competencies are being maintained. Further information on the approved training courses is in Guidelines Part III.

Training provided to state level personnel should be documented. SEMS training documentation may be integrated with agencies' normal training documentation systems. Agencies that do not currently have a training documentation system should establish a record-keeping system for SEMS training.

It is recommended that a SEMS training record-keeping system include:

- An individual training record for each person, kept either in their personnel file or in a separate training record file. The name of the course, instructor, location, and date of the course should be included in the training record.
- Maintenance of the individual training record for as long as the person is employed in a position that involves an emergency response role. Records of personnel involved in an actual emergency should be kept at least until any training compliance issues have been resolved.
- Documentation of the agency's SEMS training program including copies of the training materials used, such as, instructor syllabus, lesson plans, student notebook, exercises, and tests.

6. Exercises

Exercises provide the most effective method of training emergency staff without experiencing an actual emergency. OES is responsible for conducting periodic exercises involving the state level. The following exercise program is suggested for the state level.

First year:

1. Orientation briefing for all SOC personnel
2. Discussion type exercise to walk through SOC procedures with emphasis on the SEMS coordination role
3. SOC simulation exercise (functional exercise)

On-going exercises on a four year cycle:

1. One full-scale exercise during the four year cycle
2. One functional exercise during each of the remaining three years

The exercises may be conducted in conjunction with the regional level, state department operations centers and federal ESFs. Actual major emergency responses may substitute for exercises.

7. Planning Checklist

This planning checklist is intended to highlight major items necessary for development of SEMS at the state level.

- Have all state agencies with emergency responsibilities been informed of SEMS requirements and guidelines?
- Have the State Emergency Plan and supporting plans been reviewed and updated for consistency with SEMS?
- Have arrangements been made for communicating and coordinating with:
 - Regional Emergency Operations Centers?
 - State Mutual Aid Coordinators?
 - Department operations centers of state agencies?
 - State coordination centers of key private and volunteer agencies?
 - Federal agencies?
- Have SOC Standard Operating Procedures been updated to be consistent with SEMS?

- Have SOC staff been identified for all positions for 24 hour operations?
- Has a SEMS training plan and schedule been developed for SOC staff?
- Has a record-keeping system for documenting SEMS training been established?
- Has a state level exercise plan been developed?
- Have state agencies incorporated SEMS into their emergency plans and procedures including department operations center procedures?
- Have state agency staff assigned to department operations centers received SEMS training?