Annex A - Direction and Control

Purpose

This annex establishes workable procedures for the development, staffing, and operation of a control center within Houston County that will coordinate the county's response to emergencies with the goal of saving lives, protecting property, and restoring government services during and following an incident. The center(s) will be activated when the threat of loss of life and/or excessive property damage may occur. This applies to both natural and manmade disasters.

Direction and control is a critical emergency management function. It allows the jurisdiction to analyze potential hazardous situations, decide on the best response, direct the response teams, coordinate efforts with other jurisdictions, and make the best use of available resources.

The overall responsible party for implementing and amending this annex is the Emergency Management Director.

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

[8]Continuity of Operations Planning

Many departments in Houston County are in the process of developing their own departmental Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The responsibility of developing and maintaining the county-wide COOP lies with the Emergency Management Director.

1. Record Retention
    a. All COOP documents for the county are backed up physically and in separate, off-network locations. All documents on the network are backed up on a regular basis.
2. Key Leadership Succession
    a. Each department is in the process of identifying leadership succession roles. The responsibility of the county-wide COOP succession is as follows:
        i. Emergency Management Director
        ii. Emergency Management Deputy
        iii. Safety Officer
3. Alternate Locations for Government Services
    a. Houston County is in the process of identifying alternate locations for key government services in the event the primary county facilities are unable to be used for normal operations.

Houston County is in the process of identifying the key essential government functions in the event of a regular interruption of government services.

Emergency Operations Center Personnel and Training

The Houston County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is located in the basement level of the Justice Center. The room has the ability to be divided into two sections and comes equipped with multiple projector screens, white boards, recording capability, microphones and speakers,

and has room for over 50 personnel. A list of personnel who would be expected to staff the EOC when called is provided in the Basic Plan of this document.

1. 24-Hour Staffing for ICS Positions
   a. In the event of a necessary 24-hour staffing of the EOC, personnel responsible for staffing will identify a secondary person to provide services along with the primary staffing to rotate in 12-hour shifts as necessary.
   b. All staff can ask for outside assistance which may be provided by Region One Emergency Managers or the State EOC.
2. EOC Staff Training
   a. Houston County is in the process of providing training for county personnel in order to ensure EOC activation and processes run smoothly during an actual event.
3. Primary/Alternate EOC Roles/Functions
   a. EOC Roles are listed in the Basic Plan of this document. The functions of the command staff are as follows:
      i. The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for overall incident management, small or large. During an actual incident, the IC will have the flexibility to assign the best person to each function as appropriate for the situation.
      ii. The Public Information Officer (PIO) is responsible for compiling information to provide to the public and media.
      iii. The Safety Officer (SO) monitors incident operations and advises the Incident Commander on all matters relating to operational safety, including the health and safety of emergency responder personnel.
      iv. The Liaison Officer (LO) is the point of contact for representatives of other governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and/or private entities.
   b. The functions expected of each branch in the EOC are as follows:
      i. Operations Section Chief: responsible for managing all tactical operations at an incident. The need to expand the Operations Section is generally dictated by the number of tactical resources involved and is influenced by span of control considerations.
      ii. Planning Section Chief: responsible for providing planning services for the incident. Under the direction of the Planning Section Chief, the Planning Section collects situation and resources status information, evaluates it, and processes the information for use in developing action plans. Dissemination of information can be in the form of the Incident Action Plan, formal briefings, or through map and status board displays.

       iii. Logistics Section Chief: provides all incident support needs with the exception of logistics support to air operations.

       iv. Finance/Administration Section Chief: responsible for managing all financial aspects of an incident. Not all incidents will require a Finance/Administration Section. Only when the involved agencies have a specific need for finance services will the Section be activated.

SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Response and recovery operations are the responsibility of Houston County and municipalities and communities within its boundaries.
- Response personnel are notified/activated when an incident is beyond the normal day-to-day capabilities of the individuals involved.
- Houston County is responsible for emergency response operations in unincorporated areas of the county and in cooperation with the municipalities that have signed the intra-county EM agreement.
- Disasters and large-scale emergencies are rarely confined to one jurisdiction. Although only a portion of Houston County is likely to be impacted by a single disaster or emergency event, a multi-jurisdictional effort will be required to effectively manage most major incidents. Resources of county and municipal governments, private and volunteer organizations, and state and federal governments need to be integrated both in their operating procedures and exercises.
- "Routine" emergencies will be managed in the field under the ICS structure. As an emergency escalates ICS remains in place, but is expanded to carry out the additional functions that are needed (e.g., damage assessment, coordination of outside agencies and volunteers, public information, etc.).
- During emergency operations, fire, law enforcement, public works, medical personnel and other responders need to work together as a seamless team. This requires a different command structure than those used on a daily basis. All responders in Houston County will work within the ICS structure as set up by the on-scene Incident Commander.
- Emergency response agencies in Houston County request resources through 911 services of the HC sheriff's dispatch center. All local governments are responsible for coordinating with one another and for providing mutual aid within their capabilities in accordance with established written agreements.
- Based on the assessment of emergency conditions by the designated Incident Commander in the field, the Emergency Management Director and the Board of County Commissioners Chairman (and/or municipal leadership) may be notified and advised of the situation and the need to report to the county (and/or municipal) EOC or other county facilities.

- Activation of the EOC is particularly important when needed resources are scarce or when multiple requests for similar resources are generated from the field.
- The EOC may have to operate around the clock.
- A formal declaration of a disaster by the Houston County Board of Commissioners (and /or by affected municipalities) may be required to apply for and receive state/federal assistance. Outside funding or assistance is not guaranteed for an emergency or disaster event.
- For any major incident, Houston County may need to use personnel or resources from outside of the jurisdiction through mutual aid, due to its own limited resources and personnel. This assistance should be coordinated through the County's EOC.
- Direction and control functions may well be long term in nature, changing significantly as the situation moves from response to recovery. This function may be initiated immediately upon the onset of an event, such as when a tornado occurs, or develop gradually as the situation deteriorates, such as when a widespread flooding occurs.
- Composition of the staff assigned to the direction and control function may change significantly, as the situation progresses through the various stages of an emergency, into the recovery phase. Regardless of the phase, direction and control is a vital function that must be performed when a jurisdiction responds to any incident.
- Incident objectives are established based on the following priorities:
  - Life Saving
  - Incident Stabilization
  - Property Preservation

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

General

There are three direction and control functions in the County command structure: Incident Command, Emergency Operations Center, and the Policy Makers.

Incident Commander
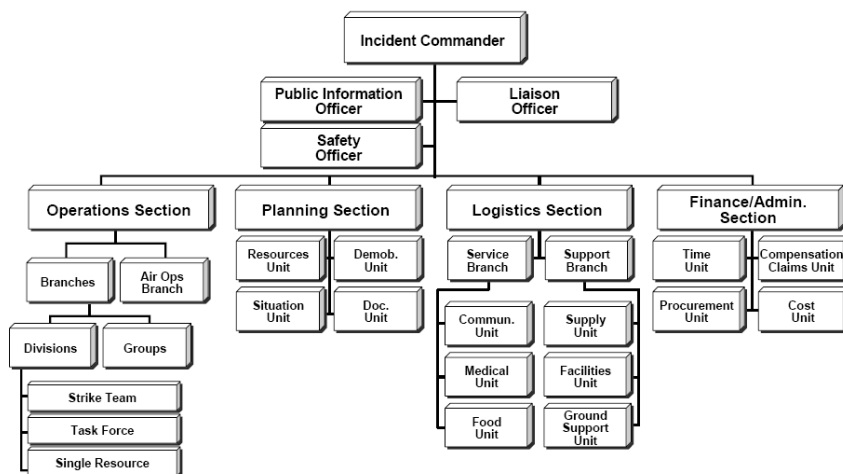
The first function is the Incident Commander (IC). The IC is in charge of all emergency response operations following the Incident Command System (ICS). The IC directs, controls, and orders resources, including people and equipment. The IC will develop a management

structure based on the needs of the incident as articulated in the incident action plan. The command structure is flexible, modular, and expands/contracts as needed. If the incident is simple and small, the Incident Commander may be the only responder and would be responsible for all functions. As the complexity and/or scale increases, more personnel are added to the command structure to take on different roles.

Command Staff: Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. They report directly to the Incident Commander.

General Staff: Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration. They report directly to the Incident Commander.

Branch: Functional, geographical, or jurisdictional responsibility for major parts of the incident operations. They report to the general staff.

The Incident Commander directs all operations from the incident command post (ICP). The ICP can take various forms from a specially designed vehicle to an identified emergency response vehicle and is located as close to the scene as practical.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

The second direction and control function is performed in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is activated by either the Emergency Management Director or another authorized representative when requested by municipalities or in response to a significant incident. The EMD will alert persons designated to occupy EOC positions upon activation. These positions can include the same sections as the IC sections, including operations, planning, logistics, and administration/finance. The EOC serves as a larger resource backup for the IC and can coordinate multiple events throughout the jurisdiction. Participants in the EOC include major county department/agency heads and other supporting agencies.

When activated, each department or agency director tasked to serve on the Command Staff or a designated replacement will immediately report to the EOC to direct and coordinate the specific agency's response to the emergency confronting the community.

All EOC positions will be filled as able by Houston County. Additional personnel may be required through regional mutual aid, neighboring counties, or the state EOC.

Policy Makers

The third role is made up of the policy makers, or the county commissioners. This group makes the general policy decisions and approval major expenditures. The policy makers are in charge of declaring a disaster in the county in order to receive state/federal assistance.

Accountability

Effective accountability at all jurisdictional levels during incident operations is essential. To that end, the following principles must be adhered to:

- Check-In: All responders, regardless of agency affiliation, must report in to receive an assignment in accordance with the procedures established by the Incident Commander.

- Incident Action Plan (IAP): Response operations must be directed and coordinated as outlined in an IAP.
- Unity of Command: Each individual involved in incident operations will be assigned to only one supervisor.
- Span of Control: Supervisors must be able to adequately supervise and control their subordinates, as well as communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision.
- Resource Tracking: Supervisors must record and report resource status changes as they occur.
- Deployment: Personnel and equipment should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority.

Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities
Commissioners (Policy Makers)

The elected or legally appointed officials are responsible for the protection of life and property within the boundaries of their jurisdictions. They will exercise all normal powers contained in the State of Minnesota Emergency Management Act of 2003 as well as local ordinances and resolutions.

Control of all crisis operations is vested in the policy makers and may be delegated to responsible individuals as stated in this plan, or to an appropriate designee as shift arrangements dictate.

Incident commander
- Notify the EOC of the situation
- Ensure clear authority and knowledge of agency policy
- Ensure incident safety
- Establish an Incident Command Post
- Send a senior representative to the EOC, when the EOC has been activated during an emergency
- Obtain a briefing from the prior Incident Commander and/or assessing the situation
- Establish immediate priorities
- Determine incident objectives and strategies to be followed
- Establish the level of organization needed, and continuously monitoring the operation and effectiveness of that organization
- Manage planning meetings as required
- Approve and implementing the Incident Action Plan
- Coordinate the activities of the Command and General Staff in the ICP
- Approve requests for additional resources or for the release of resources
- Approve the use of students, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel
- Authorize the release of information to the news media

- Order demobilization of the incident when appropriate
- Ensure incident after-action reports are complete

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)

- Develops accurate and complete information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other matters of general interest for both internal and external consumption
- Establishes and maintains a working relationship with local media
- Prepares a call-down list for disseminating emergency preparedness information to groups that do not have access to normal media (e.g., schoolchildren, access and functional needs, etc)
- Prepares emergency information packets for release; distributes pertinent materials to local media prior to emergencies; and ensures that information needs of persons with access and functional needs are met.
- Performs a key public information-monitoring role

The PIO is not always the spokesperson for the media. In small-scale events, the PIO may be the spokesperson, but in a larger scale event, a separate PIO and spokesperson could be needed.

Only one incident PIO should be designated. Assistants may be assigned from other agencies or departments involved. The Incident Commander must approve the release of all incident-related information. For further details on the PIO and public information see Annex C.

SAFETY OFFICER (SO)

The SO is responsible for the set of systems and procedures necessary to ensure the ongoing assessment of hazardous environments, the coordination of multi-agency safety efforts, and the implementation of measures to promote emergency responder safety and the general safety of incident operations. The SO has emergency authority to stop and/or prevent unsafe acts during incident operations. In a Unified Command structure, a single SO should be designated, in spite of the fact that multiple jurisdictions and/or functional agencies may be involved. The SO must also ensure the coordination of safety management functions and issues across jurisdictions, across functional agencies, and with private-sector and non-governmental organizations.

LIAISON OFFICER (LO)

Representatives from assisting or cooperating agencies and organizations coordinate through the LO. Agency and/or organizational representatives assigned to an incident must have the authority to speak for their parent agencies and/or organizations on all matters, following appropriate consultations with their agency leadership. Assistants and personnel from other agencies or organizations (public or private) involved in incident management activities may be assigned to the LO to facilitate coordination.

ASSISTANTS

In the context of large or complex incidents, Command Staff members may need one or more assistants to help manage their workloads. Each Command Staff member is responsible for organizing his or her assistants for maximum efficiency.

ADDITIONAL COMMAND STAFF

Additional Command Staff positions may also be necessary depending on the nature and locations of the incident and/or specific requirements established by the Incident Commander. For example, a legal counsel may be assigned directly to the Command Staff to advise the Incident Commander on legal matters, such as emergency proclamations, legality of evacuation orders, and legal rights and restrictions pertaining to media access. Similarly, a medical advisor may be designated and assigned directly to the Command Staff to provide advice and recommendations to the Incident Commander in the context of incidents involving medical and mental health services, mass casualty, acute care, vector control, epidemiology, and/or mass prophylaxis considerations, particularly in the response to a bioterrorism event.

RESOURCES BRANCH CHIEF

- Manage operations, logistics, and finance/administration
- Assist in the development of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan. This usually requires filling out the ICS 215 prior to the planning meeting
- Supervise the execution of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan, including making and approving changes
- Request resources
- Approve release of resources from active assignments
- Maintain close communication with the Incident Commander
- Manage all incident logistics
- Develop as required, the Communications, Medical, and Traffic Plans
- Manage all financial aspects of an incident
- Meet with assisting and cooperating agency representatives as needed
- Ensure that all personnel and equipment time records are accurately completed and transmitted to home agencies, according to policy
- Brief agency administrative personnel on all incident-related financial issues needing attention or follow up

PLANNING BRANCH CHIEF

- Collect and manage all incident-relevant operational data
- Supervise preparation of the Incident Action Plan
- Conduct and facilitate planning meetings
- Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for Planning Section units
- Establish specialized data collection systems as necessary (e.g., weather)
- Assemble information on alternative strategies and contingency plans

- Provide periodic predictions on incident potential
- Report any significant changes in incident status
- Compile and display incident status information
- Oversee preparation of the Demobilization Plan

Center Support Chief

- Provide support for EOC activities including IT, lodging, and meals

Situational Awareness Chief

- Provided detailed information regarding incident including weather, maps and other location data, and other necessary information
- Coordinate with awareness agencies (i.e. National Weather Service, GIS, etc)

Emergency Management Director/Deputy Director

- Coordinate EOC staff activities
- Keep the EOC in an operational ready state
- Assign qualified people to EOC staff positions and keep a current roster of the staff
- Develop an alert system for alerting the policy makers and the EOC staff of any impending emergency
- Activate the EOC and recall the EOC staff
- Supervise the EOC and coordinate with the Command Staff to assure timely aid or assistance is rendered
- Schedule the EOC staff for a three shift, around the clock, operation, if necessary
- Arrange for feeding of the staff with center support chief
- Update the alert/staff roster and this Annex at least once each year
- Hold briefings for the policy makers and the Command Staff to update their knowledge of the incident
- Make provisions for displaying pertinent information, major events/occurrences, damage survey information, requests for assistance, etc., in the EOC for the Policy Makers and the Command Staff
- Make provisions for relocating staff members to an alternate EOC if necessary
- Compile an inventory of personnel, equipment, materials and facilities which may be needed in an emergency. This inventory will constitute the county Resource Manual, which will be updated annually as needed
- Use the equipment typing system in accordance with NIMS as developed

[39]All Tasked Organizations

All tasked organizations will:

- Maintain current internal personnel notification rosters and standard operating guidelines to perform assigned tasks
- Negotiate, coordinate, and prepare mutual aid agreements, as appropriate

- Analyze need and determine specific communication resource requirements
- Ensure equipment and procedures are compatible with NIMS and local procedures
- Identify potential sources of equipment and supplies
- Provide for continuity of operations by taking action to:
  - Ensure that lines of succession for key management positions are established to ensure continuous leadership and authority for emergency actions and decisions in emergency conditions
  - Protect records, facilities, and organizational equipment deemed essential for sustaining government functions and conducting emergency operations
  - Ensure, if practical, that alternate operating locations are available should the primary location suffer damage, become inaccessible, or require evacuation. Alternate operating locations provide a means to continue organizational functions during emergency conditions
- Protect emergency response staff. This includes actions to:
  - Obtain, as appropriate, all necessary protective respiratory devices and clothing, detection and decontamination equipment, and antidotes for 4-16 personnel assigned to perform tasks during response operations
  - Ensure assigned personnel are trained on the use of protective gear, detection and decontamination devices, and antidotes
  - Provide security at facilities
  - Rotate staff or schedule time off to prevent burnout
  - Make stress counseling available
- Ensure the functioning of communications and other essential equipment. This includes actions to:
  - Test, maintain, and repair communications and warning equipment
  - Stockpile supplies and repair equipment

Administration and Logistics
[40]Reports and Records

All sensitive information involving the incident process will be transferred and disseminated using a secure communication method, including but not limited to encrypted radio communication, secure email, or word of mouth. All sensitive information involving the incident process will be stored in appropriate, secure locations as deemed by branch section chiefs, the incident commander, or others in command of the incident.

Initial Disaster Report

This report is designed to provide Minnesota HSEM with basic information about any evolving incident or disaster. Damage assessment reporting is addressed more specifically in Annex J.

Events Log

A record of major events and response actions will be compiled by members of the EOC support staff to provide a history of actions taken.

CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

During any large scale emergency, the EOC will become the center for all local government control. It will be from this center that all decisions and direction will emanate to the public concerning the emergency. Lines of succession for critical personnel have been established and will be presented in the county COOP.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The Emergency Management Director is responsible for the content of this annex and for its currency. All EOC staff members must be familiar with its content.

This annex will be reviewed and exercised in accordance with the Basic Plan.

AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

FEMA, Guide for Increasing Local Government Emergency Management Readiness During Periods of International Crisis; State and Local Guide (SLG) 100.

FEMA, SLG 101, Guide of All-Hazard Emergency Operation Plans