All-Hazards GUIDEBOOK

A Guide to Developing All-Hazards Emergency Plans and Preparedness Programs for The Nation's Public Power Systems

AMERICAN PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION™
Powering Strong Communities

All-Hazards GUIDEBOOK

A Guide to Developing All-Hazards Emergency Plans and Preparedness Programs for The Nation's Public Power Systems

AMERICAN PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION
Powering Strong Communities

The American Public Power Association is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. We advocate before federal government to protect the interests of the more than 49 million customers that public power utilities serve, and the 93,000 people they employ. Our association offers expertise on electricity policy, technology, trends, training, and operations. We empower members to strengthen their communities by providing superior service, engaging citizens, and instilling pride in community-owned power.

Disclaimers

Acknowledgments

This document builds upon previous work leading to the American Public Power Association Emergency Planning Toolkit for Public Power Utilities that is now being replaced by this Guidebook. A significant amount of time has been dedicated by American Public Power Association ("Association") utilities and staff, both in the development of the prior document and this Guidebook. Specifically, the following individuals provided meaningful contributions to this effort:

Rick McKinley,
Chair of the Public Power Mutual Aid Working Group and Distribution Engineer
City of Kirkwood Electric, Missouri

Bob Scudder
Safety Coordinator
Grand River Dam Authority, Oklahoma

Ken Lewis
Business Continuity and Emergency Management
Salt River Project, Arizona

Jim Fischer
Director, Transmission and Distribution Construction
Lincoln Electric System, Nebraska

This document was developed by Kinetics Consulting LLC under the direction and technical guidance of Association staff, including Michael Hyland, Nathan Mitchell, Sam Rozenberg, Alex Hofmann, Giacomo Wray, and Patrick O'Rourke. This material is based upon work supported by the Department of Energy under award number DE-OE0000757.

All-Hazards GUIDEBOOK

A Guide to Developing All-Hazards Emergency Plans and Preparedness Programs for The Nation's Public Power Systems

The American Public Power Association works with its utility, state association, and joint action agency members, as well as other industry associations and federal agencies to provide guidance on emergency planning and preparedness programs. In 2013, the Association formed the Mutual Aid Working Group (MAWG) to formalize the existing mutual aid network for the nation's public power utilities. Since that time, the MAWG has overseen the development of additional resources, including this guidebook, to help members build capabilities to better respond to, and quickly recover from, incidents resulting from all hazards.

"It's impossible to plan for every possible contingency. However, we've made some valuable strides to provide a resource to help with the proper approach to dealing with your potential emergencies."

– Rick McKinley, Chairman,
American Public Power Association
Mutual Aid Working Group

The Role of Public Power

The American Public Power Association (Association) partners with its members to promote public power and help community-owned utilities deliver superior services through joint advocacy, education, and collaboration. The Association's members strengthen their communities by providing superior services despite ongoing threats of severe weather, natural disasters, and manmade or technologic hazards. The Association produced this guidebook to aid members in the development or continuous improvement of their preparedness programs and all-hazards planning efforts. The Association maintains many related resources to support member efforts to achieve excellence in utility operations through reliability, safety, and disaster preparation programs, including:

- **Public Power Mutual Aid Playbook – A Guide to Response and Recovery for the Nation's Public Power Utilities**: Offers guidance for public power utilities, network coordinators, and other Association members during disasters to ensure efficient power restoration when mutual aid is needed.
- **Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Exercise-in-a-Box:** A standalone resource designed to provide everything you need to conduct a tabletop exercise, including guidance on preparing for the exercise, facilitating the exercise, and conducting a post-exercise debrief. The resource includes three scenarios: winter storm, flooding, and tornado.
- **FEMA Public Assistance & Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs Toolkit:** Public power utilities are eligible to receive disaster assistance through FEMA following major disaster declarations. This toolkit provides resources for how to best position your utility to maximize FEMA Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation funding.
- **Restoration Best Practices Guidebook:** Offers guidance on public power best practices for restoration efforts, specifically focusing on preparedness, activation and initiation, operations, and cost recovery and mitigation.
- **Storm Communications Toolkit:** Provides pre-scripted messages and communications guidance that can be tailored for use by your utility when responding to a storm event.

In addition to these materials, further reference documents can be found in the Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance section of this guidebook.

Contents

The All-Hazards Approach

The all-hazards approach is based on the idea that while the causes and types of emergencies can vary widely and be hard to predict, the basic functions needed to respond are relatively similar from one event to the next. For example, regardless of incident type, an organization needs to be able to:

- Know who is in charge at every point during an incident
- Conduct initial notifications and/or dispatch specific individuals or resources
- Conduct initial response and life safety activities
- Preform an initial assessment of the situation
- Brief others that need to be engaged or notified
- Determine incident status, objectives, and priorities
- Determine strategies and tactics to meet those objectives
- Determine the resource and logistical needs to support the plan
- Communicate the plan with those completing the work, even across shift changes
- Communicate with other stakeholders, responders, and the public
- Evaluate the objectives, strategies, tactics, and resource needs regularly as an incident progresses
- Complete an orderly scaling-down of the event
- Return to normal in a way that ensures resources are ready to be used again

This concept allows a utility, or any other organization, to focus on building and improving these functions over time rather than having a completely different approach for every type of incident. In practical terms, it allows an organization to worry less about planning for everything and transitions the focus to planning for anything; building response capabilities that can be used in any combination and scaled up or down depending on the type, scope, and complexity of the specific emergency. Once that common foundation is established, supporting guidance, resources, or procedures can be added for specific incident types. These concepts and structures are the core components of an organization's All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which typically provides the framework for all other response activities.

Using the all-hazards approach allows an organization to have a consistent, scalable approach to manage any emergency, any time. This makes it simpler to develop and maintain a comprehensive preparedness program, including planning, organizing, equipping, training, exercising, and continuous improvement considerations.

Building a Preparedness Program

Emergency response is nothing new to public power. Public power providers are more than utilities – they are community service providers that have helped to strengthen American communities for more than 100 years. Beyond supporting local programs and commerce, public power has continued to deliver superior services despite severe weather, manmade catastrophes, and a variety of threats and hazards over the years. With this tradition in mind, building a preparedness program is not about just responding to incidents, it's about creating a system and culture of preparedness that evolves with industry best practices, changes in the risk environment, and increasing customer and stakeholder expectations over time.

Building a preparedness program should not be a one-time event. New risks are always on the horizon, lessons can be learned from every incident, innovations in technology are constant, and changes to the workforce are increasing. The goal of a preparedness program is to create a system that identifies and mitigates risk, establishes consistent yet adaptable processes, and builds capabilities. A preparedness program should not be the responsibility of just one person or one department. While many mid-to-large utilities have established an emergency manager or other emergency preparedness positions, preparedness activities continue to be a shared responsibility across an organization. Similar to safety, utilities should strive to create a culture of preparedness that applies to line employees, support staff, and leadership.

Building a preparedness program is not about just responding to incidents, it's about creating a system and culture of preparedness that evolves with industry best practices, changes in the risk environment, and increasing customer and stakeholder expectations over time.

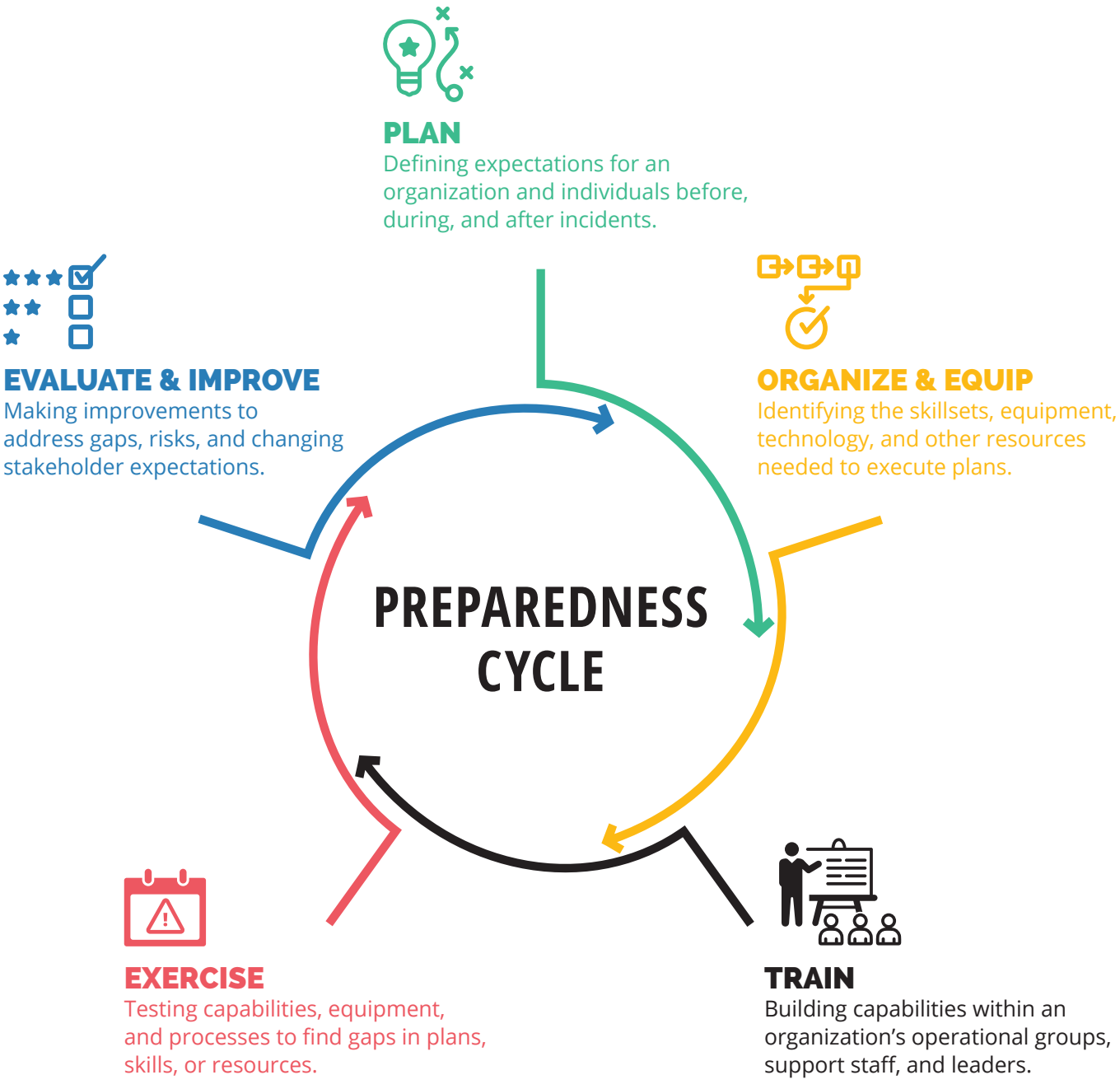
Using the all-hazards approach allows an organization to have a consistent, scalable approach to manage any emergency, any time.

Program Leadership

All successful programs require leadership and the preparedness program is no exception. The preparedness program manager could be a dedicated emergency manager, or an additional assigned responsibility of an individual within operations, safety, or another department.

The preparedness program manager should be someone that is able to engage the entire organization and has both the responsibility and authority to establish:

- **Strategic direction:** Provide a programmatic view of what capabilities the organization needs; which types of emergencies are possible or likely; what resources, skillsets, or technology solutions are required; and how risks should be prioritized and addressed.
- **A consistent approach:** Using the all-hazards approach, the preparedness program manager should define standards for the organization, including consistent roles, responsibilities, and notification or activation triggers. They should also establish an information sharing process to ensure all groups are continually planning from the same information during events, also called maintaining a "common operating picture." Finally, they should outline a standardized decision making or action planning process that can be repeated systematically for the duration of an event and a process for transferring command (or moving responsibilities from one individual to the next) as an incident evolves or a shift change occurs.
- **Preparedness resources:** Following the all-hazards approach means there are common functions to preform regardless of incident type. Standardized tools, technology, and training materials can be used for a wide range of incidents and audiences. For example, nearly all incidents require some type of emergency notification. Different people might need to be notified based on the specifics of the event, but developing a phone tree process or implementing an emergency notification technology tool is something that the preparedness program manager should oversee. The preparedness program manager should continually evaluate the program's resource needs, capability gaps, or process inefficiencies and determine how to best address each need based on the goals of the program.
- **Response capabilities:** Depending on the expectations set in the plan documents, the preparedness program manager should determine capability goals for the organization and the appropriate level of training and testing required on an ongoing basis. This strategic, capability-building information is often captured in a multi-year training and exercise plan.
- **Continuity strategies:** Most emergency plans are focused on the safe delivery of critical services to customers. It is also important to acknowledge that while restoring service or responding to some other type of operational emergency, a utility's own processes or key resources might be disrupted. This type of disruption might result from tornados, hurricanes, pandemics, or cyberattacks. Regardless of incident cause, there are a few key resource categories that may be disrupted and therefore a few categories of continuity strategies needed. The main impact areas requiring continuity strategies include: workplace, workforce, IT systems, and third party suppliers and services. Another way a utility's continuity of operations may be compromised is through damage to — or failure of — a physical asset or facility. However, this type of disruption is often already covered in restoration plans or under asset management.
- **Program monitoring and continuous improvement:** Monitor the program and develop a process to recognize opportunities for improvement; share the opportunities for improvement with leadership for review and final decision.



This graphic was created for the American Public Power Association based on the Preparedness Cycle graphic and concepts found in the FEMA Comprehensive Preparedness Guide.

Source: United States, Federal Emergency Management Agency. Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans, version 2.0, 2010, pp. 1–4. Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101.

The Preparedness Cycle

The preparedness cycle is a straightforward way to think about, build, evaluate, and continually improve essential components of a preparedness program. Whether designing a program for the first time or evaluating long-standing efforts, the most important thing to remember is that preparedness is an ongoing process and this cycle should be repeated as risks, people, environments, stakeholder expectations, and program goals change. Additionally, while a preparedness program manager might carry out activities that support multiple segments of the preparedness cycle simultaneously, it is essential that all efforts start and end with planning. The plan documentation should drive capability-building activities and then lessons learned from exercises or actual incidents should inform the plans. For that reason, this guidebook is organized into the five segments of the preparedness cycle.

Plan

Defining expectations for an organization and individuals before, during, and after incidents.

Planning is the mechanism that permits utilities to manage the lifecycle of any incident. Plans can be strategic in nature, focusing on how to address risks and build capabilities over time, as well as dedicated to providing specific operational or tactical instructions by situation and role. In many cases, the process of planning (identifying risks, determining the best course of action, clarifying responsibilities by role, and establishing processes to gather information, make decisions, and manage resources) is just as important as the plan itself when including a broad planning team. Most importantly, plans should be reviewed regularly, updated often, and clearly explain what to do and why to do it.

Organize & Equip

Identifying the skillsets, equipment, technology, and other resources needed to execute plans.

Once a utility has decided what to do about the risks its faces and which response functions it needs to perform, the next step is determining how to best organize or equip the organization to make it happen. This segment of the preparedness cycle focuses on identifying the needed skillsets, equipment, technology, or other resources to perform the actions described in the plans. This should include standard equipment and skillsets as well as specialized resources and equipment or surge capacity needs. Some of these resources may be maintained by the utility or preparedness program manager directly, whereas others may be obtained through mutual aid agreements, emergency procurement, or contracted through third party services or suppliers.

Train

Building capabilities within an organization's operational groups, support staff, and leaders.

Training activities should focus on building capabilities within the utility workforce and leadership, as defined in an organization's plans. Trainings should provide awareness of threats and hazards while progressively increasing in complexity to ensure all individuals with a responsibility during an incident have clear expectations of their role and the tested ability to perform their required functions.

Exercise

Testing capabilities, equipment, and processes to identify gaps in plans, skills, or resources.

Once the planning, organizing and equipping, and training activities have been conducted, a utility should use exercises to test its capabilities as well as to improve its plans, processes, and procedures. Exercises provide an opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of training activities and increase response personnel's familiarity with specific processes. While most exercises ultimately use aspects of a scenario to test participants' response, exercise planning should begin by focusing on what capabilities, functions, and plans need to be tested and then design a scenario to trigger actions in those areas. Conduct after-action reviews and develop after-action reports following every exercise to ensure necessary changes in plans, equipment, or training are completed in a timely manner.

Evaluate & Improve

Making improvements to address gaps, risks, and changing stakeholder expectations.
The demands on a utility's preparedness program are ever-changing. While the basic response functions remain the same, changes in the risk environment, technology, and customer or stakeholder expectations require utilities to continually evaluate the effectiveness of their preparedness programs. Improvement plans following exercises and incidents, benchmarking with peers, and reviewing the latest guidance from the Association and other reliable sources are all good ways to maintain strong preparedness programs.

Whether designing a program for the first time or evaluating long-standing efforts, the most important thing to remember is that preparedness is an ongoing process.

The preparedness cycle should be repeated as risks, people, environments, stakeholder expectations, and program goals change.

Using this Guidebook

The All-Hazards Guidebook was designed to benefit public power systems both with and without existing preparedness programs or dedicated emergency management or preparedness staff.

Members without formal preparedness programs should start with the planning section. It is best to begin to determine the key risks faced and determine the plan types needed before continuing through the remaining sections.

For members with existing preparedness programs, the preparedness program manager may reference any step within the cycle to compare their efforts with the all-hazards approach and best practices presented therein.

Additionally, the attachments section provides sample task lists by functional area to use in advance of an event or in the development of checklists to attach to your organization's All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan.

Planning

Planning defines expectations for an organization and individuals, before, during, and after incidents. This can range from how to strategically manage risk over the next few years, to a detailed approach for building response capabilities through training and exercising, or providing specific instructions for individuals filling response roles during an emergency. The scope and focus of emergency plans are dependent on the risks an organization faces and the preparedness program's goals. Often, a preparedness program includes a set of cohesive operational and programmatic documents that work together to cover the range of topics in the preparedness cycle. To begin the process of preparing or reviewing your plans, this section of the guidebook provides information on:

- Forming a planning team
- Risk identification and prioritization
- Building capabilities in your organization
- Deciding on an all-hazards planning framework for your organization
- Resources for plan development and maintenance
- Developing an all-hazards emergency operations plan
- Key considerations for a continuity of operations plan
- Energy assurance planning and coordination with external partners

Traditionally, the center of an organization's operational planning efforts is the emergency operations plan (EOP). An all-hazards EOP provides structures and concepts to follow when developing related emergency plans or procedures. For that reason, the majority of this guidebook is committed to helping a utility develop an all-hazards EOP. Whether considering how to incorporate the all-hazards approach or Incident Command System (ICS) into planning efforts, or determining the right approach to expand your emergency plans beyond a standard restoration plan, the EOP is a great place to start.

Forming a Planning Team

One of the most important steps in developing or updating an emergency plan is the formation of a planning team. Often this includes:

- **Preparedness program manager:** Provides direction and alignment with other documents, standards, and program goals. In some cases, the preparedness program manager may also be the plan owner. The previous section, Building a Preparedness Program, provides more detail on the responsibilities and expectations of this role.
- **Plan owner:** Serves as the Project Manager and lead plan developer.
- **Core planning team:** Program manager, plan owner, and subject matter experts that will provide continued support of the planning process by providing document content, reviews, and comments.

- **Plan approver(s):** Member(s) of the utility management team that sponsors, supports, or otherwise approves the planning effort.
- **Subject matter experts (SMEs)** who are engaged as needed. May or may not be part of the core planning team.

Depending on the scope and duration of the planning effort, the plan owner or project manager may designate a core planning team of SMEs to regularly review materials and provide feedback, whereas other SMEs may only need to be brought in to provide insights on their specific topical area. For example, if a plan contains safety guidelines, then it will be important to get the input of a designated safety expert, or even have them draft a specific part of the plan.

"Planning is fundamentally a process to manage risk."

– FEMA Comprehensive Preparedness Guide

The plan owner should have the full cooperation of management and staff in the development of plan materials, setting of a project schedule, and access to necessary historical and relevant information. The plan owner should develop a schedule showing a list of people to be interviewed over the course of his or her work. Specialists from various key areas of utility operations, shared/support services, and technology should have input during plan development, training, exercises, and regular reviews. After meeting with SMEs and developing new plan content, the plan owner should schedule regular reviews with the core planning team to receive suggestions and feedback. This approach allows multiple people to be involved while not being pulled away or distracted from their regular jobs for long periods of time. If the core planning team is charged with developing significant portions of the plan, the plan owner should make sure they understand the goals for the effort and general scope and timeline for the project to guide the team of people who might not normally work together.

Risk Identification and Prioritization

To develop and maintain effective emergency plans and preparedness programs, public power providers need to understand the scope of risks they face, analyze the possible impact of those risks, and decide the appropriate course of action for evaluating, prioritizing, accepting, monitoring, or mitigating such risks. Utilities are keenly aware of the traditional events that can affect operations. The severity and frequency of severe weather events and other natural disasters varies from region to region across the country, which makes it especially important for each utility to identify and evaluate its own risks. There are also new threats and hazards arising from changes in technology, cybersecurity threats, workforce turnover, aging grid infrastructure, and other new aspects of the risk environment. The planning process, as part of an overall preparedness program, should allow for systematic risk identification and provide opportunities to manage, reduce, or eliminate risks in the future. Organizations typically have several departments involved in the identification and management of the various types of risks. Once risks are identified they are often addressed through a strategic combination of strategies, which include but are not limited to:

- Limiting the financial impact to the organization through insurance or similar risk-sharing models.
- Mitigating the physical impact or reducing the likelihood of the risk through tangible changes (e.g. replacing, relocating, hardening or creating redundant assets or infrastructure).
- Developing processes and capabilities to respond to and quickly recover from the risk when it is realized. This is the focus of the all-hazards EOP as described further in the Planning section.

There are many methodologies through which utilities can identify risks, ranging from a threat and hazard identification and risk assessment (THIRA), business impact analysis (BIA), enterprise risk management (ERM) process, or other hazard vulnerability assessments (HVA). Preparedness program managers should utilize and integrate with existing risk management processes for their organization where possible and select the approach that works best for them. At a minimum, a utility should understand[1]:

1. What threats and hazards can affect the community and the utility
2. If they occurred, what impacts those threats and hazards would have on the community and the utility
3. Based on those impacts, what capabilities the utility should have

For more information on conducting a risk assessment, see the references provided in the Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance section.

Building Capabilities in Your Organization

Once there is a good understanding of the risk landscape for an organization, the next step is to estimate the capabilities needed to best address those risks. Generally speaking, capabilities may be needed in the areas of protection, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery. The focus of the all-hazards EOP should be in the response phase.

The purpose of identifying capabilities to build in your organization, is to prioritize limited resources based on the highest probability or highest consequence threats. Put another way, defining capabilities allows your Preparedness Program to focus activities and investments on the most important things your organization needs to confidently be able to do when faced with any emergency. These capabilities can then be used to drive training schedules, exercise activities, and targets by which improvement activities are measured.

Capabilities should be identified based on the goals of an organization and the specific risk environment. However, based on the all-hazards approach, common abilities utilities need regardless of incident type include:

- Know who is in charge at every point during an incident
- Conduct initial notifications and dispatch specific individuals or resources
- Conduct initial response and life safety activities
- Perform an initial assessment of the situation
- Brief others that need to be engaged or notified
- Determine incident status, objectives, and priorities
- Determine strategies and tactics to meet those objectives
- Determine the resource and logistical needs to support the plan
- Communicate the plan with those completing the work, even across shift changes
- Communicate with other stakeholders, responders, and the public

---

1 *United States, Federal Emergency Management Agency. Webpage: Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment.* **https://www.fema.gov/threat-and-hazard-identification-and-risk-assessment**

- Evaluate the objectives, strategies, tactics, and resource needs regularly as an incident progresses
- Complete an orderly scaling-down of the event
- Return to normal operations in a way that ensures resources are ready to be used again

Any of these items (and others based on your risk assessment) can be turned into capabilities your organization identifies to build or improve upon. For example, "Conduct initial notifications and dispatch specific individuals or resources" may prompt your organization to determine a capability is needed in the area of emergency notifications. To be most useful and easily understood by the whole organization, active statements that include the words "is able to…," "has," and "can" are recommended. Written as a capability statement, this might look like:

- **Emergency notifications:** The utility has redundant methods to notify all employees, or select response teams, immediately following an incident.

Other examples include:

- **Incident action planning:** The utility is able to collect, analyze, and consolidate information through a standard process that establishes the official incident status, incident objectives, and current resource requirements on a regular basis.
- **Emergency levels/triggers for escalation:** The utility is able to quickly determine and communicate the scope and operational requirements of an incident as it evolves.
- **Crisis communications:** The utility is able to collect, coordinate, and share consistent and timely information with all engaged stakeholders before, during, and after an incident.
- **Common operating picture:** The utility is able to maintain accurate information across all internal and external response organizations to ensure all groups are planning from the same information.

It is important to remember these capabilities do not need to be determined from scratch. Beyond the compiled risk information, an organization should consider other sources that can help determine what a utility might need to be able to do when faced with any emergency or disaster. These sources include:

- Lessons learned from past events (internal to your organization or outside)
- Existing plans and procedures
- Emergency management plans (from local and county emergency management offices)
- FEMA or American Public Power Association planning resources
- Benchmarking activities with other utilities

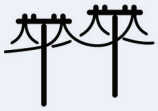
This guidebook also includes a section on Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance that provides links to Association resources, federal guidance, and other helpful materials.

Deciding on an All-Hazards Planning Framework for Your Organization

Once having a clear understanding of the direction of your preparedness program, it is helpful to determine how the components of the program will come together through various plans and documents. There is no set structure for an organization's planning framework; however, the all-hazards approach lends itself to a cohesive structure in which a strategic direction and standards are established for the program, then various plans and supporting documents align with that framework. This ensures structures and terminology are consistent from one plan to the next, while shortening the individual documents significantly.

On the next page is an example of a fully expanded planning framework; keep in mind that based on the size and complexity of your organization, some of these elements may be combined into single plans.

For example, the contents of a typical emergency management policy and strategy may be incorporated into the beginning of your all-hazards EOP. Hazard-specific guidance may be developed as attachments to the organization-specific plans (e.g., attaching an ice storm guidance document to the electric department restoration plan).

PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM DOCUMENTS 	**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY**	Why the utility is establishing a preparedness program and who is responsible for management and oversight
	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	Where program is headed and what the utility needs to be able to do in response to any hazard (i.e. strategic direction, response standards, and capability goals)
UTILITY-WIDE PLANS 	**ALL HAZARDS EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN (EOP)**	How the utility responds to emergencies using a standard response process and roles
	CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	How the utility communicates during emergencies
	BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN	How the utility continues to operate during emergencies
ORGANIZATION-SPECIFIC PLANS (if needed) 	**PLANS BY ORGANIZATION OR DEPARTMENT:** • **ELECTRIC EMERGENCY PLAN (I.E. RESTORATION PLAN)** • **WATER EMERGENCY PLAN** • **IT INCIDENT PLAN, ETC.**	For example, how the electric department responds to emergencies using the framework in the EOP
HAZARD-SPECIFIC GUIDANCE 	• **ICE STORM** • **HURRICANE** • **FLOODING, ETC.**	Specific additional guidance for responding to a particular event (e.g. considerations or best practices for restoration following an ice storm)
SITE-SPECIFIC PLANS & GUIDANCE (if needed) 	**ELECTRIC & WATER FACILITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS** • **SEVERE WEATHER** • **BOMB THREAT, ETC.**	Specific guidance for how that facility responds to an emergency (i.e. generation plant emergency plan)
DEPARTMENT-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES OR PROCEDURES (if needed) 	• **CUSTOMER SERVICE** • **OPERATIONS** • **FINANCE** • **HR, ETC.**	Specific procedures or response strategies by department (for example, documented strategies should there be a disruption in workplace, workforce, IT systems, or third party suppliers/services that affects operations)

Due to the nature of emergencies, during a response there are often multiple, concurrent impacts with several departments engaged or affected. For example, a tornado that impacts a utility building likely will also have impacted services to customers nearby and the ability of utility staff to access their work location or equipment. In the same way, preparedness, prevention, and mitigation activities should address critical interdependencies to understand a complete picture of the actual risks and allow for multiple plans to be activated concurrently. Having a single planning framework can reduce redundancy and ensure a common approach to response regardless of impacts. Keep in mind that this framework may change as risks are identified, capabilities are tested, and organization restructuring occurs.

After a planning framework is defined, it is important to establish ownership for each of the key components. The responsibilities for plan development and maintenance may fall to a single preparedness program manager or maybe divided up by document to various plan owners with the preparedness program manager providing oversight.

Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance

There are several resources available that may assist an organization in the development of an EOP, other plan documents, or evaluating and improving preparedness program efforts.

Available resources include:

- **Public Power Mutual Aid Playbook – A Guide to Response and Recovery for the Nation's Public Power Utilities:** Offers guidance for public power utilities, network coordinators, and other Association members during disasters to ensure efficient power restoration when mutual aid is needed.
- **Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Exercise-in-a-Box:** A standalone resource designed to provide everything you need to conduct a tabletop exercise, including guidance on preparing for the exercise, facilitating the exercise, and conducting a post-exercise debrief. The resource includes three scenarios: winter storm, flooding, and tornado.
- **FEMA Public Assistance & Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs Toolkit:** Public power utilities are eligible to receive disaster assistance through FEMA following major disaster declarations. This toolkit provides resources for how to best position your utility to maximize FEMA Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation funding.
- **Restoration Best Practices Guidebook:** Offers guidance on public power best practices for restoration efforts, specifically focusing on preparedness, activation and initiation, operations, and cost recovery and mitigation.
- **Storm Communications Toolkit:** Provides pre-scripted messages and communications guidance that can be tailored for use by your utility when responding to a storm event.
- **Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans – Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101:** Promotes a common understanding of the fundamentals of risk-informed planning and decision making to help planners examine a hazard or threat and produce integrated, coordinated, and synchronized EOPs. The goal of the guide is to make the planning process routine across all phases of emergency management and for all homeland security mission areas.

- **Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Guide – Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 201:** Provides guidance for identifying hazards and threats, conducting a risk assessment for those threats, and estimating the resources needed to meet the associated capability targets.
- **Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program:** A set of guiding principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning.

Developing an All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan

An all-hazards emergency operations plan provides the structures and concepts for a utility to follow regardless of incident type, scope, or complexity. The EOP is the most versatile of emergency plans because it provides instruction on the basic functions to be performed as well as providing decision-making processes to keep everyone that is involved on the same page with incident status, objectives, and resource requirements. This makes the EOP a valuable tool in coordinating pre-incident planning and response activities for routine incidents (e.g. storms), planned events (e.g. festivals or sporting events), and emergencies never faced before (e.g. attack on an operational technology system).

An EOP establishes lines of authority, the relationships between groups/ departments, and how response actions will be coordinated.

For organizations with multiple emergency plans, the EOP can provide the standard or norms — called the "concept of operations" — with which other documents align. According to FEMA's Comprehensive Preparedness Guide: Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans, a complete EOP describes:

- The purpose of the plan
- The situation and assumptions
- Concept of operations
- Organization and assignment of responsibilities
- Administration and logistics
- Plan development and maintenance
- Authorities and references

An EOP also establishes lines of authority, the relationships between groups/departments, and how response actions will be coordinated. Ultimately, an EOP describes the response organization and process a utility will use to respond to any emergency. As discussed further in the Emergency Planning Frameworks section, once key components of the EOP are formalized, subsequent plan documents can be created that further explain how the concept of operations applies to specific groups and hazards. For example, the EOP might describe the action planning process for the organization, whereas a restoration management plan might spell out how electric operations use that approach to keep everyone on the same page with restoration status, objectives, and resource requirements for the next 16-hour shift.

Key features of an all-hazards EOP include:

- **A consistent, scalable response organization:** ideally this should provide for a single chain of command from any frontline employee all the way up to the manager of the utility and beyond (e.g. board, commissioners, city manager). A recommended response organization used by many utilities is the National Incident Management System (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS).
- **A consistent, scalable action planning process to guide decision making and information sharing during any incident:** especially those that span a shift change (also known as the incident action planning process).
- **A process for ensuring all engaged or impacted groups are planning from the same information,** even as the situation evolves (also known as establishing a common operating picture).
- **Clearly defined thresholds or triggers for notifying individuals or activating other response roles** as an incident escalates or transitions in scope or complexity.
- **Established criteria for who should fill which roles at which times** based on the needs of the incident, the individuals' skillset/expertise, and overall resource picture.
- **A process for transferring command or responsibilities from one individual to the next as an incident evolves.** This enables a plan to be flexible and useful for various event types, rather than just being 'on' or 'off' for large events.
- **Defines the organization's response priorities and goals** keeping in mind that life safety, incident stabilization, and protection of property and the environment are always priorities.

Emergency Operations Plan Contents

The contents of a utility-wide, all-hazards EOP depend largely on the norms and culture of your organization, as well as the structure and document scope defined in your emergency planning framework. For example, if your organization has one central repository for policies, that is likely where an emergency preparedness policy should reside, rather than within the EOP itself. Conversely, if there is no such centralized handling of administrative policies, the EOP may be a good location for such information so it is all maintained in one place. In the same way, some organizations are accustomed to separating administrative and strategic documents from work instructions or operational expectations. If that is the case for your utility, you might consider moving the risk information and regulatory requirements or background content from the EOP to a separate emergency management strategy document. While all traditional components of an EOP are important in their own right, it is important to keep the intended audience of the document in mind — and how that audience will use that document — when determining the structure of your plan. Your core planning team should be involved early in the process to make such decisions. EOP components to consider including are listed below. Any of the components from this list that do not end up in your organization's EOP should be considered for inclusion in other documents within your planning framework. Additional examples of EOP structures can be found in FEMA's guide for Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans.[2]

---

2 *List derived from United States, Federal Emergency Management Agency. Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans, version 2.0, 2010, pp. 3-12. Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101.*

Introductory Material & Preface

- Cover page
- Statement of leadership support/promulgation
- Approval and implementation page
- Record of changes
- Record of distribution
- Table of contents: Should be logically ordered and clearly identify the major sections and subsections of the plan to make finding information within the plan easier

Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Planning Assumptions

- Purpose: Defines what the EOP is meant to do and provides a brief synopsis of the plan and planning framework
- Scope: The entities, geographic areas, and types of responses for which the plan applies
- Risk environment/situation overview
- Planning assumptions and intent/priorities

Concept of Operations (CONOPS)

This should provide readers with a way to visualize the flow of events and key aspects of the response process, including: escalation, ongoing incident management, de-escalation, and demobilization.

On the next page is an example of a utility CONOPS. Keep in mind that the contents of a CONOPS section will vary based on the response process of an organization.

Example Concept of Operations Section Contents

Pre-Planning or Initial Response Responsibilities

The plan should address the criteria and procedures for triggering pre-incident planning calls or meetings, if an incident provides sufficient warning (e.g. such as an impending storm or hurricane). If there is no warning for an incident, there should be triggers to initiate an initial response and initial assessment of the situation.

Initial Notification and Dispatch

An EOP should set expectations for initial notification and/or dispatch processes by department or group. The specifics of that notification (identifying which individual or department receives the initial notification, as well as any criteria for deployment of resources) may be included within the EOP, or more likely, within the organization-specific plan or hazard-specific guidance document.

Assuming Command

The EOP should clearly identify the process for assuming command and what command entails, regardless of incident size or scope. The plan should also address the authorities delegated to the person in command and the process for the transfer of command to another individual.

Initial Response and Assessment

The plan should address the processes of performing an initial assessment including prioritizing protective actions of people, property, and the environment in accordance with your organization's procedures. The plan should describe the path of notifications both internally and externally as a result of the initial assessment.

Additional Notifications and Activations

The plan should address the criteria for any other notifications that may be required beyond those conducted before the initial assessment.

Transfer of Command and Unified Command

The plan should address the procedures for transferring command as well as the procedures for establishing unified command with police, fire, or other outside entities.

Incident Evaluation and Objective Setting

The plan should cover the procedures for determining incident levels/thresholds and the corresponding guidelines for establishing an incident command post or activating an Emergency Operations Center.

Incident Action Plan Development

The plan should define processes for establishing and regularly updating information on incident status, objectives, and resource requirements. Put another way, the utility should have a formal process for determining what happened, what needs to be done next and in the long term, and what resources are required to make that happen. This process should be repeated at a regular cadence until the event is resolved.

Public Information and Crisis Communications

This portion of the plan should address or reference policies and procedures for how information is communicated to customers and the public. These communication processes maybe included in your EOP or a separate crisis communications plan and outlined at a high-level within the EOP concept of operations.
The Association's Storm Communications Toolkit provides pre-scripted messages and communications guidance that can be tailored for use by your utility when responding to a storm event. See Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance for more details.

Liaison with Outside Entities

The plan should address the policies and procedures for establishing and maintaining operational coordination activities with other engaged entities. Ideally, the plan should assign responsibility establishing and maintaining liaisons both during the incident as well as any pre- and post-incident activities to improve response coordination. For some utilities, liaison activities involve sending a representative to the city, county, or state emergency operations center.

Demobilization

Finally, the plan should address the processes and procedures for demobilizing from a response in an orderly way. The plan should identify the general prioritization of demobilization (e.g. mutual assistance crews before or after local crews) and ensure that all resources are returned in a "ready to use" state. For personnel purposes, this may include scheduling their release to ensure adequate rest before returning to work.

Response Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

This should outline the organization that will activate to respond to an emergency situation. This should include functions to be performed as well as reporting relationships and a chain of command. The ICS includes a standardized response organization that many utilities rely on to establish ownership of key response functions and roles. Find more information on ICS in the next section.

Direction, Control, and Coordination

This should specify who has tactical and operational control of response assets, as well as coordination between operational personnel, utility leadership, and the city or other outside agencies.

Information Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination

Each organization has different information needs during an emergency, yet most utilities have learned over the years what information is most essential to determine the next best course of action. This section of an EOP should identify the type of information needed, the sources of that information, how it will be used/shared, and specific time requirements for refreshing the information (if any). While many restoration management plans often include a call schedule for morning, afternoon, and evening updates, the EOP may simply state that each department should establish a frequency for updating information on incident status, objectives, and resource requirements. The frequency for information management may change during the course of an event, but there should be a process for establishing how this occurs and who determines the frequency of updates.

The Department of Energy, FEMA, and the White House request updates on utility responses during natural and manmade disasters. That request comes through the Association. Including the Association in your dissemination chain when appropriate will allow the Association to provide that information on your behalf.

Communications

Communication practices vary widely from one utility to the next. Some utilities have internal communications staff and others may rely on representatives of the city or other agencies to speak on their behalf. The EOP may be a good place to house basic information and guidance regarding communication during incidents or a full crisis communications plan may be needed. Regardless of where communications may reside in your emergency planning framework, basic communication aspects to consider include:

- Determining the groups that you are likely to communicate with during large-scale emergencies;
- Writing sample messages that cover circumstances likely to be experienced; refine the messages for key audience groups and keep messages short and simple to facilitate comprehension. The Association has produced sample messages and communications guidance for storm events that can be tailored for use by your utility. See Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance for more information.
- Determining the methods to be used to convey the messages (phone, cell, text, social media, radio, fax, email, web conferencing, etc.);
- Determining the likely timing or frequency for delivering the messages;
- Determining which people in the utility would be the likely originators or senders of the messages;
- Ensuring that communication channels and contact information lists are available and up to date;

- Exploring alternate or redundant methods for transmitting the information as you may need to use one or more of them; and
- Reviewing and/or rehearsing delivery of the messages.

Additionally, when developing communications processes there are two key concepts to keep in mind:

- **Unity of effort**[3] is about coordinating activities among various organizations to achieve common objectives. Unity of effort enables organizations to support each other while maintaining independent authority and responsibilities. From a communications perspective this can mean sharing resources (or channels) to get common messages out to a community.
- **Unity of message** is about ensuring consistent information is distributed internally as well as with other engaged organizations and agencies. There are resources available through the Association as well as through the Electric Subsector Coordinating Council on ensuring unity of message for events involving the utility sector as a whole.

Administration, Finance, and Logistics

This section provides information on general support requirements and the availability of services/support for all types of emergencies, as well as policies for managing such resources.

Plan Development and Maintenance

This section discusses the overall approach to planning implemented at your utility and the assignment of plan development and maintenance responsibilities. As noted before, this information may also be contained in a strategy document that houses the emergency planning framework.

Authorities and References

Regulatory or local requirements for emergency operations activities, agreements made (i.e. mutual aid agreements, emergency procurement contracts, etc.) as well as the standards or industry best practices referenced in the development of your plans.

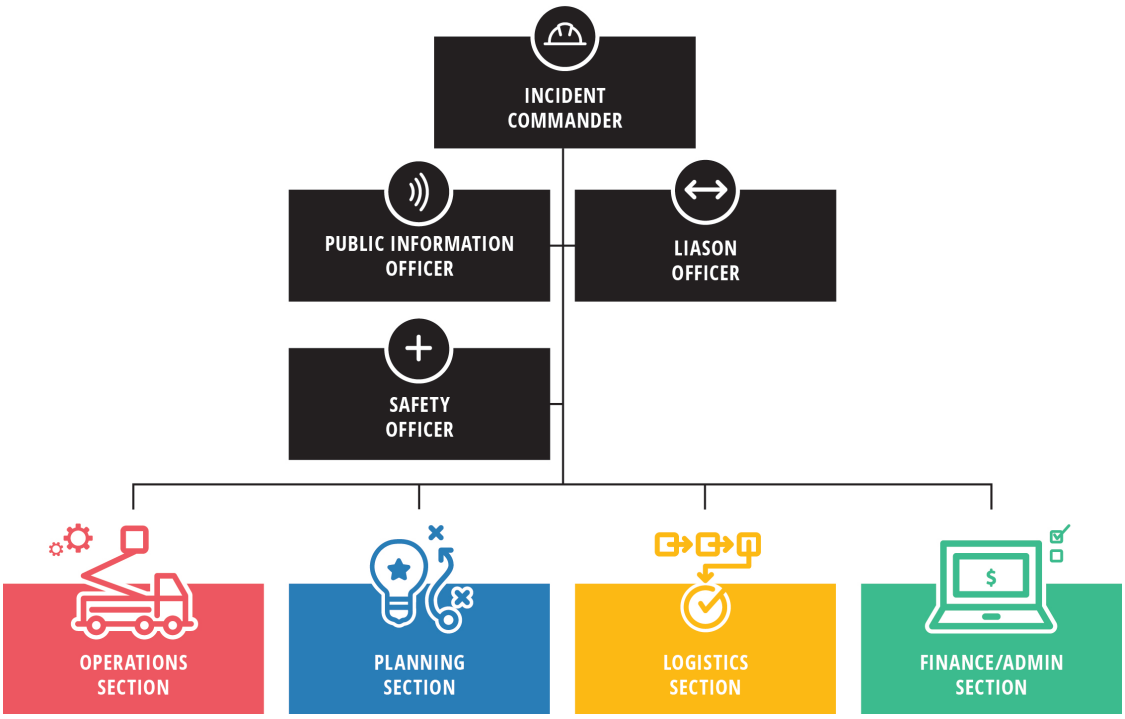
The Incident Command System (ICS)

Many utilities, particularly those that share an emergency operations center with other community entities, have adopted the principles and framework of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) to guide personnel and departments to work together to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. ICS focuses on the basic functions needed to manage any incident and divides those functions into scalable roles that can be assigned to individuals as necessary to create an effective response organization. The hallmark of an all-hazards EOP is its flexibility and scalability; using ICS within your EOP aides in achieving that goal. Using ICS allows for any number of people to be engaged in a response while maintaining clear accountability for all aspects of a response and a manageable span of control for every supervisor.

---

3 *United States, Federal Emergency Management Agency. National Incident Management System, version 3.0, 2017, pp 3*

This is possible because ICS is based on the idea that regardless of the size or scope of an incident, every response requires the same basic functions to be performed. These functions include assessing the situation and developing a plan of action; determining the equipment, resources, and supporting items required to execute the plan; executing the plan by completing necessary work/operations; and performing administrative and finance functions to properly account for time or resources used. The ICS simply takes these response functions and structures them as a response organization, which also includes important elements of command (or leadership/direction) and key considerations such as safety, communicating with the public, and operational coordination with other entities.



- **Command:** Responsible for overall management of an incident, including development of incident objectives and strategy.
- **Operations section:** Assists with developing strategy while identifying and supervising resources needed to accomplish the incident objectives.
- **Planning section:** Manages the planning process, tracks resources, develops status reports, and produces the incident action plan (IAP).
- **Logistics section:** Orders resources, anticipates supporting resources, and develops transportation, communication, and medical plans, if necessary.
- **Finance and administrative section:** Tracks costs, develops contracts, and pays for resources.

It is worth noting that the incident commander is responsible for all ICS functions under their role until they assign an individual to fill that role. The incident commander only staffs the functional roles that are needed to effectively manage the incident. Therefore, utilizing the ICS response organization does not specify a specific number of individuals needed. The number of people within any ICS response organization is based on the scope of the incident, as determined by the incident commander.

Key Considerations for Continuity of Operations Plans

Continuity of operations, also known as business continuity, planning addresses the risk of disruptions to critical processes within the utility and involves developing strategies to allow the utility to continue to perform critical functions with minimal interruption. While continuity planning traditionally describes how an organization will continue critical processes despite an emergency, in many instances the incidents that affect utility operations also affect services to customers (e.g. a tornado). This means utilities may find themselves conducting customer restoration activities at the same time they are working to continue or resume their own processes. Similarly, even for events that don't cause customer outages directly (such as an IT outage), maintaining safe, reliable customer service is of the utmost importance. That means there are additional considerations for utilities – as critical service providers to communities – to take into account when prioritizing critical processes. Life safety — of employees and customers — and reliability should be top factors, in addition to the typical elements of financial, regulatory, reputational, and strategic risk.

It is not possible to anticipate exactly how an event will disrupt business processes or operations. Therefore plans must be flexible to include changing priorities, understanding that public safety, employee safety, and providing critical services are of paramount importance.

Continuity of operations plans should be grounded in the organization's strategic priorities and the amount of risk your leadership is comfortable with. In keeping with the all-hazards perspective, the priorities will dictate which of the primary impact scenarios require additional planning efforts:

- **Workplace:** this should include consideration for all regularly available equipment, materials, vital records, and important assets inside primary work locations or facilities.
- **Workforce:** all employees or personnel required to continue critical processes, including restoration activities. Strategies should include options for augmenting staffing or procuring additional resources (e.g. cross-trained staff, contractors, mutual aid).
- **IT systems:** strategies for completing key work when critical IT systems are unavailable.
- **Third-party suppliers or services:** identifying critical suppliers and services by department or business process; taking into special consideration changes in priority/urgency depending on the type or timing of the event, impending weather, and other hazards or threats.
- **Infrastructure/utility assets:** while for most companies it is advisable to capture assets under workplace, a utility's continuity depends heavily on physical infrastructure that is ubiquitous over large geographic areas and may take weeks, months, or even years to replace. Therefore, continuity plans should have special provisions for such impacted assets or facilities. Asset management plans or restoration plans may suffice in many instances.

Continuity of operations may take a variety of formats, ranging from a single plan with considerations by critical process to a base plan with multiple subsequent departmental or functional plans. The structure of the utility, reliance on the municipality or joint action agency for services such as IT support and other functions, and the overall preparedness program planning framework should be taken into consideration when deciding the plan structure and contents. Regardless, the first step should be understanding the specific risk environment and identifying potential business impacts in order to develop priorities and strategies to ensure continuity or expedited resumption of operations.

Continuity of Operations Basic Objectives

- Identify high-level critical processes and all associated functions
- Prioritize these essential functions and determine the time sensitivity of resumption
- Identify strategies or "work arounds" for key resources that could be impacted
- Determine staffing and resource requirements
- Determine potential options for obtaining such resources (e.g. cross-training of internal staff, contractors, emergency procurement, mutual assistance)
- Integrate plans for supporting activities/functions
- Develop communication plans and processes for the entirety of an incident
- Determine processes for the development of incident action plans (i.e. daily action plans) until the incident is resolved

Coordination with External Partners and Energy Assurance Planning

Due to the critical nature of the energy sector (including electricity, oil, and natural gas) and the interdependencies between it and many other critical sectors, special considerations and plans are needed that involve an even wider range of stakeholders. While public power providers are responsible for the development and maintenance of their own preparedness programs, as the owners and operators of key energy resources, utilities should engage with relevant external partners and participate in state and local energy assurance planning efforts where possible.

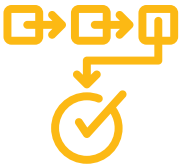
Energy assurance in an all-hazards planning environment provides for planning and coordination across many stakeholder groups for possible prolonged energy disruptions (beyond a typical restoration event). According to the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO):

"Energy assurance guarantees a robust, secure, and reliable energy infrastructure that is also resilient – able to restore services rapidly in the event of any disaster…While the owners and operators are responsible for their energy systems in providing energy supplies, it is the responsibility of state and local officials to work with energy providers and stakeholders from other jurisdictions, government agencies, businesses, and related organizations to ensure the wellbeing and progress of our communities."

As a public power provider, it is important to coordinate with local, county, and state emergency officials when developing or exercising emergency plans. While not all areas have local energy assurance plans, it is beneficial for both the community and the utility to participate in such efforts where possible to increase awareness of threats, hazards, and interdependencies and to improve processes for risk mitigation, information sharing, internal and external stakeholder response coordination, and communications/public information. With or without a local energy assurance plan, education, training, and exercising of scenarios that may result in prolonged energy disruption are worthwhile when including a wide range of organizations, agencies, and the private sector. As with all aspects of an all-hazards approach, energy assurance plans should integrate with all other plan documents, especially the continuity of operations plan and EOP.

NASEO provides many resources as well as direct technical assistance, education, and outreach to support energy assurance planning and coordination.

See NASEO's energy assurance program page for contacts and more details:
https://www.naseo.org/programs-energy-assurance Organizing and Equipping



Organizing and Equipping

After identifying the capabilities necessary for your organization's preparedness program, determining a planning framework, and developing new emergency plans, the next step in the preparedness cycle is to organize and equip the utility based on those plans and capabilities.

In addition to physical equipment and technology, the organizing and equipping segment includes recognizing what competencies and skills people need to execute the expectations laid out in the plans. Keep in mind, this may include identifying gaps in knowledge, skills, or abilities of existing personnel (which can be reconciled through training) or gaps in capacity (which can be remedied through additional resources available through mutual assistance or contract). The Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 201, referenced in Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance, has additional information about estimating resources needed to build capabilities based on your identified risks.

Also within the organizing and equipping function is the process of identifying equipment, technology, supplies, and other tangible items that your organization will need in order to deliver the identified capabilities. Because these resource requirements are specific from one utility to the next, determining resource needs should be done with the input of your subject matter experts, derived from your plan documents, and based on your preparedness program goals. The attachment section of this document provides an overview of some of the resource considerations by ICS functional area: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance and Administration.

Preparedness Program Document Security

Preparedness program managers should consider how plans are organized, stored, and secured. Files should be organized for ease of use while following appropriate security precautions. Practicing the best methods for securing sensitive documents, such as your risk identification documents and planning documents, can be straightforward with the right guidelines and awareness training in place. It's important to review your utility's safe document practices and information storage policies on a regular basis and, where needed, suggest changes that may improve existing practices. Due to our ever-changing security environment, it makes sense to remain current on best practices and frequently audit how information is stored and sensitive documents are referenced.

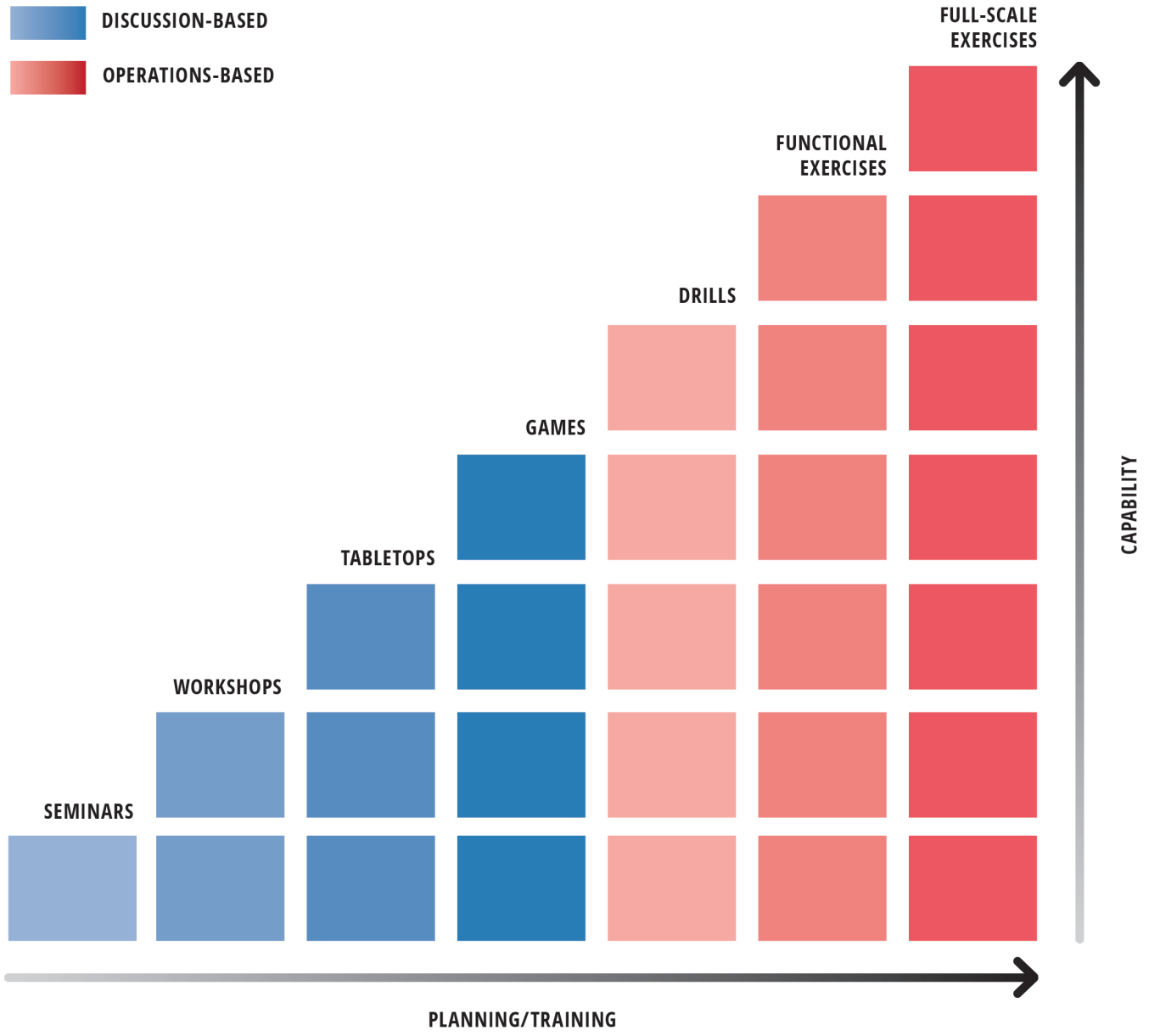
You should follow the document security processes established in your utility. To limit exposure, it is beneficial to maintain a distribution list to help maintain document security. As a general practice, critical infrastructure information should be protected and kept separate from administrative and program documents. Infrastructure information or other sensitive system or utility information should be available on a need-to-know or official use only basis, whereas the basic contents of an emergency plan may need to be shared with response partners such as local police, fire, or emergency management. As a general rule, specific infrastructure and system information, as well as information regarding vulnerabilities and risks, should not be included in the body of your emergency plan. EOPs may have broad distribution and therefore sensitive information should be incorporated only by reference.

Training and Exercising

Training and exercising is all about making sure capabilities are in place and preparedness activities are working as intended. To design an effective training and exercise program, a utility should have specific capability goals in mind for the organization as a whole. From that point, the next step is determining who within the organization needs which skillsets and what level and frequency of training is adequate to get them there.

Trainings should be progressive in nature, building skills over time and providing refreshers when needed. Training can take many forms, from on-the-job or in the field to instructor-led in a classroom setting. Training types often depend on the intended outcome and resource constraints, but regardless of setting, some of the most effective trainings place participants into environments (actual or simulated) that parallel those of an actual emergency. For example, trainings should engage the audience with questions on next steps or where to locate specific information in a plan. Similarly, hands-on activities, workshops, and exercises also can more closely mirror the types of activities employees are accustomed to engaging in on a day-to-day basis, making the integration of new knowledge and skills as straightforward as possible.

Regardless of training type or delivery method, goals and sequential schedules for trainings should be captured in a multi-year training and exercise program. This document should identify the capabilities to be built over time and demonstrate how the mix of training and exercises will produce the desired outcome. Trainings and exercises may be interspersed during a calendar year and take several forms. Exercise types are described more on the next page.



A Progressive Approach to Capability Building Graphic created for the American Public Power Association from graphics and concepts found within the Federal Emergency Management Agency Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

Source: United States, Federal Emergency Management Agency. "Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program", 2013.

A Progressive Approach to Capability Building

A progressive exercise program is structured in a way so that each successive activity builds on the last. One of the key benefits of a progressive training and exercise program is that participants can slowly become comfortable with a complicated response through a series of smaller steps. This approach is commonly used to learn new, complex skills; especially those that will be used in high-stress, high-consequence, and potentially fatigue-inducing environments where relying on skills that are fully ingrained in an individual's skillset is essential. This is how progressive training in emergency management works. Employees start by independently learning a basic skill and continue to add additional components until they can confidently navigate even the most complex scenarios.

To design an effective training and exercise program, a utility should have specific capability goals in mind for the organization as a whole.

Trainings should be progressive in nature, building skills over time and providing refreshers when needed.

Types of Exercises

There are two categories of exercises: discussion-based and operation-based. Discussion-based exercises focus on changes to the current emergency management plan and taking a conceptual look at how to respond to an emergency. These methods help lay the initial groundwork for understanding a change to current operations, as well as some of the crucial elements of a response. This includes seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises, and games. Operation-based exercises take this initial groundwork to the next level by testing out the plans through action-oriented exercises. These include drills, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises.

Discussion-Based Exercises

Seminars

Seminars can be beneficial for review of specific components of the emergency management program and discussing potential changes to the emergency management plan.

Workshops

Workshops require an increased level of participation and have an end goal of building a product such as a hazard-specific guidance document, continuity of operations plan section, or mutual aid agreement. It's critical to keep the goals of the workshop clear and well-defined to ensure the creation of a useful and usable end product.

Tabletop Exercises

The main goal of a tabletop exercise is to practice responding to an emergency in a non-emergency environment. This will allow the participants to notice, discuss, and work out any kinks in the emergency management plan before it is needed. A tabletop exercise might help bring to light any misunderstandings or need for adjustments to the plan. Tabletop exercises also allow participants to collaborate, which can help develop relationships between departments and individuals whom might not work together on a day-to-day basis.

The complexity of tabletop exercises can be adjusted. A simple exercise may outline all the information for an emergency scenario upfront, then set the participants into action to discuss the scenario together and write down a step-by-step resolution. In a more advanced tabletop exercise, new information is added to the scenario as the participants are working through the problem, requiring them to problem solve and make decisions as a group.

A skilled facilitator is essential to a successful tabletop exercise. The more comfortable the participants are with contributing to the discussion, the more value will be gained.

The Association has produced an Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Exercise-in-a-Box, which provides everything needed to conduct a tabletop exercise, including guidance on preparing for the exercise, facilitating the exercise, and conducting a post-exercise debrief. The resource includes three scenarios: winter storm, flooding, and tornado.

Games and Competitive Exercises

Games involve two or more teams looking at a single scenario, each working together to make decisions about how to respond. Games allow participants to look at multiple approaches to decision making in a given scenario, how those changes might affect the overall outcome, and highlight the key decision-making points within a given scenario. Games are flexible in their structure and can be designed to increase in complexity as the participants develop greater skill and confidence.

Operations-Based Exercises

Drills

A drill is beneficial for testing out a narrow range of skills within a single department or organization. Drills can be beneficial for practicing/maintaining current skills as well as training on new equipment or procedures. For example, drills may be appropriate for testing radios, phones, fire escape routes, or setting up an aspect of a staging area or emergency operations center (EOC). Drills can also be used to determine if plans can be executed as designed, to assess whether more training is required, or to reinforce best practices.

Drills can be useful as a standalone tool or in a series to prepare several organizations to collaborate in a full-scale exercise.

Functional Exercises

Functional exercises add additional complexity compared to drills, as they contain more details and overlap between different functional areas. Functional exercises should unfold as realistically as possible, introducing new elements into the scenario throughout the exercise.

Full-Scale Exercises

Full-scale exercises are the most complicated and resource-intensive exercises, and will also provide the highest level of insight into the community's level of preparedness for an emergency. A full-scale exercise is a chance to practice multiple skills learned through the other types of exercises. Full-scale exercises require participation from all involved agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions.

Full-scale exercises start with a scenario that is continuously being updated, requiring the participants to change course throughout the exercise. It is meant to replicate as many elements of a real emergency scenario as possible, requiring participants to react, solve problems, and make decisions in real-time and under stress. Unlike functional exercises, full-scale exercises require all actions within a scenario to be performed, including physically deploying resources to the appropriate locations and completing any actions that would be required in a real emergency.

Continuous Improvement

Preparedness is not a one-time event. By this point in the preparedness cycle, the preparedness program manager has developed a system to identify and mitigate risk as well as have capabilities in place that can be improved over time. Evaluation and improvement of the preparedness program occurs at regular intervals as well as sporadically throughout the year. As with any risk-reduction activity, it is essential to maintain a sense of urgency and not let any part of the program become stale or complacent. That's why it is important to establish parameters for evaluation and continuous improvement within your plans and program document.

Frequency of Reviews

Preparedness activities start and end with planning. Once the segments of the preparedness cycle are completed, it is time to circle back and start again. The best plans evolve over time as new lessons are learned, experience is gained, and the objectives, risks, or priorities of an organization change. Often, these changes are required to meet present circumstances, risks/threats, and compliance requirements. Detailed and time-sensitive information (such as contact lists) may need reviewing even more frequently.

As part of the Reliable Public Power Provider (RP_3®) program, the Association recommends that emergency plans should be revised and/or reviewed on a regular basis. A utility should review and/or revise their disaster plan on an annual basis. For smaller utilities, this process may be as simple as verifying or updating contact information of essential personnel and important partners in the community. An outdated plan will become stale and unusable should a disaster occur after conditions have changed.

Many utilities complete reviews of their plans on an annual basis as well as following a triggering event. Triggering events may be chosen by your organization based on input from stakeholders and past experiences. Some examples of possible triggering events include, but are not limited to:

- A major incident or disaster
- A significant change in operational resources (e.g., key personnel turnover, organizational restructuring, management process changes, new/retired facilities or equipment)
- Formal update of planning guidance, standards, or requirements
- Each activation resulting in an after-action report and improvement plan that affects a plan document
- Major exercises that identify plan or process changes
- Changes in hazard or threat profiles
- Changes in the acceptability of specific risks

Once selected, these triggers and a regularly scheduled plan review timeframe should be incorporated into the policy, strategy, or plan documents.

Ongoing Plan Coordination

Regardless of the number of plans maintained by a utility, one thing is critical to planning success: plan coordination. New or revised plans should be reviewed by a single person (e.g., the preparedness program manager) or the planning team so that potential conflicts are identified and eliminated. Some of the important steps in this process are as follows:

- Review plans, checklists, call trees/notification tools, team charts, and communications plans to determine if conflicts exist, or if there are issues with over-allocating certain resources. Suggest calling a meeting with key teams represented to review and discuss critical assets used during emergencies and setup a table or spreadsheet to capture potential coordination problems.
    - Note: use of the Incident Command System, which allows assigning emergency roles based on the best person for the specific function depending on the needs of the incident as it evolves, can help reduce resource conflicts within plan documents.
- Create a master list that includes the types of events that require specific types of equipment or facilities and who they may be assigned to; highlighting potential conflicts.
- Determine from all resources assigned if a potential conflict may occur if more than one plan is implemented concurrently. For example, if two departments plan on using the same alternate location should their primary work location be inaccessible, or other issues where plans may expect the same person to be in two locations at once.
- During exercises or drills, pay special attention to conflicts that may have been uncovered and determine which parts of the plan or continuity strategy may have produced the conflict.
- Re-assign or reallocate resources, where needed, so that conflicts no longer exist, from an all-hazards perspective.

Best Practice Sharing and Benchmarking

Benchmarking is one of the most helpful means of measuring the comparative effectiveness of a program, while also obtaining new or more efficient and effective approaches to all aspects of a preparedness program. The Association provides members with multiple opportunities to share best practices, network with other utilities throughout the year, as well as providing exercise and workshop activities to facilitate benchmarking.

The Association also maintains listserv discussion forums for members to discuss concerns, ask questions, get answers, and share best practices and resources on multiple topics of interest with colleagues from utilities across the country. The listserv may help a utility to identify other public power utilities to benchmark a preparedness program.

See the array of listserv topics and sign up at https://www.PublicPower.org/about/members/listservs

Exercise and Significant Response Evaluation

Exercises should be designed to ensure that evaluators will be able to observe specific capabilities. During an exercise, evaluators should observe and record data that can be later compared to the specific emergency plan. Following an actual emergency requiring a significant response, or any planned exercise, conduct a “hotwash” or debrief to discuss areas for improvement or changes in plans or procedures.

Maintaining a Record of Exercises and Actual Events

The findings of an event or exercise evaluation should be consolidated into an after-action report and improvement plan (AAR). AARs should have a well-defined structure, with the goal of highlighting key insights gathered, identifying root-cause solutions, and comparing performance against capability goals or emergency plans where possible.

Ideally, following an exercise or incident, an AAR should be compiled in draft form and then be presented back to response participants to provide them with the ability to confirm that the findings have been characterized correctly. At that point, improvement activities should be assigned appropriate ownership.

The preparedness program manager should ensure AARs are completed within a reasonable time following an exercise or event by scheduling and facilitating a discussion with key players, taking notes to capture key themes, and ensuring ownership of improvement items is assigned. Operations (or the respective responding group) should participate as subject matter experts, leading the conversation and owning the resulting items on the improvement plan. Most important to this process is the discussion on areas for improvement, validation that action items will address root causes where possible, and ensuring items are completed with the resources necessary.

In addition to serving as a guide for future improvement actions, the AAR provides the record needed to verify that the member utility is conducting exercises regularly.

Following an event or exercise, an AAR should highlight key insights gathered, identify root-cause solutions, and compare performance against capability goals or emergency plans.

Sample Task Lists by Function

The following items can be used as the basis for customized checklists or guidance documents that support your organization's Emergency Operations Plan or may be useful for consideration in your pre-emergency, action planning activities. Not all of these items are applicable for every organization or every incident type and should be tailored to your purposes and added to overtime. The sample planning meeting agenda can be used as a starting point to develop your own planning meeting agendas. These lists of items have been organized by the emergency function being performed, in alignment with the functional roles of the Incident Command System.

These task lists are provided in no particular order and may be carried out by a single individual or assigned to multiple individuals within a functional area (e.g., the list of tasks under 'command' may be divided up between the Incident Commander and deputy Incident Commander) or delegated to another section (e.g., Incident Commander delegates to the planning section chief). Some tasks are one-time actions whereas others may be ongoing or repeated multiple times over the duration of the incident. These lists should not be considered comprehensive and should be supplemental to your emergency plans and built out over time based on the needs of your organization.

These task lists have been developed for public power providers based on industry best practices and FEMA standards. Additional resources, including general ICS position-specific checklists and incident action planning tools (such as the ICS 201 - Incident Briefing Form) can be found at the FEMA Emergency Management Institute ICS Resource Center: https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/icsresource/

Command

Note many of the command functions will be completed through delegation or with the support of additional groups/departments.

A. Ensure incident priorities are adhered to:

- **I.** Safety of incident personnel and the public.
- **II.** Incident stabilization.
- **III.** Property/environmental preservation.

B. Determine incident information and be prepared to brief others, engaging support as needed. If relieving an existing incident commander, obtain a briefing from the current incident commander and organization leadership.

- **I.** Determine current situation status (may include weather, evolving threats, current or potential customer impacts, and engaged agencies/organizations).
- **II.** Determine current incident objectives and strategy.
- **III.** Determine current resource status (e.g., operational, support staff, contractor, mutual aid).
- **IV.** Determine whether a written incident action plan is required.
- **V.** Determine time and location of first planning meeting.
- **VI.** Determine which emergency plans should be activated and where contingency plans may be needed.

C. Activate and supervise emergency teams as necessary and complete notifications to required groups or interested parties.

D. Determine which facilities are required to manage the incident. Activate Incident Command Posts and/or an Emergency Operations Center as needed. Task the appropriate group with setup of the incident facilities and testing of related equipment.

E. Ensure appropriate information is provided to a public information officer and approve statements or press releases as appropriate.

F. Identify any policy directives for the management of the incident.

G. Ensure appropriate interface with emergency management and other relevant agencies. Determine frequency for updating information or providing representation to city, county, or state Emergency Operations Centers.

H. Activate or establish a resource tracking system for the duration of the incident. This should include a means of determining and tracking currently working, on-call, or otherwise available resources (contract crews, mutual aid, etc.).

- **I.** Establish parameters for resource requests and releases.
- **II.** Confirm who has ordering authority within the organization.
- **III.** Confirm those orders that require command authorization.
- **IV.** Review requests for critical resources.
- **V.** Determine if other internal departments should suspend normal activities and assist with response or recovery efforts.

Command Continued

I. Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for all groups engaged in the incident. This may include progress updates from operations or planning on periodic predictions on incident potential, weather data, resource challenges, or special equipment availability. For incidents that may include a federal disaster declaration, additional information management processes may be required. See Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance for more details.

J. Coordinate preparation of a safety message with safety officer, as required or hazards evolve.

K. Continue to monitor incident status and notify all appropriate parties or changes in status, objectives, strategies, or resource requirements or availability.

L. Instruct the planning team to prepare contingency plans as needed.

- **I.** Review current and projected incident and resource status.
- **II.** Develop alternative strategies.
- **III.** Identify resources required to implement contingency plan.
- **IV.** Discuss alternatives with organization, operational, and/or planning leadership.
- **V.** Determine which contingencies should be included in the incident action plan.

M. Meet with leaders of operations and planning groups to discuss the proposed objectives, strategy, and tactics. Develop an incident organization diagram that aligns with the selected strategy.

N. Ensure planning meetings are scheduled and conducted at a regular frequency. The agenda for planning meetings should be based on the needs of your organization and the incident, however a sample planning agenda is provided as a starting point.

O. Approve the incident action plan and supervise preparation and distribution of a written incident action plan, if required, based on the outcome of the planning meeting.

P. Ensure each section/group has adequate coverage and relief based on established work schedules and required rest periods. Ensure a process is in place to brief incoming personnel on the current situation and special considerations or processes.

Q. Ensure that all personnel observe established level of operational security.

R. Periodically check progress on assigned tasks of command and general staff personnel. Approve necessary changes to strategic goals and the incident action plan. Ensure that a liaison officer is making periodic contact with engaged agencies.

S. Keep organizational leadership informed on incident-related problems and progress.

T. Ensure preparation of a demobilization plan, if appropriate. This should cover all details necessary to ensure the orderly release/ replenishing of resources so they are returned to their home location in a ready-to-use state. For crewing resources, this should include the order of release of mutual aid, contractor, and native resources, taking into consideration cost and distance from home location. This should also include a plan for return to routine operations.

U. Ensure all incident documentation is adequately/securely stored in accordance with your document retention and security policies.

Operations

A. Obtain briefing from incident commander.

- **I.** Determine incident objectives and recommended strategies.
- **II.** Determine status of current tactical assignments.
- **III.** Identify current organization, location of resources, and assignments.
- **IV.** Confirm resource ordering process.
- **V.** Determine location of current staging areas and resources assigned there.

B. Organize operations section to ensure operational efficiency, personnel safety, and adequate span of control.

C. Establish operational period (aka response shifts). The operational period should correspond to the frequency established in the incident action plan.

D. Establish necessary staging areas.

E. Develop and manage tactical operations to meet incident objectives.

F. Continually assess life safety.

- **I.** Identify and mitigate hazards, keeping in mind changing conditions such as severe weather or wind speeds.
- **II.** Evaluate and enforce use of appropriate protective clothing and equipment.
- **III.** Implement and enforce appropriate safety precautions.
- **IV.** If relevant, adjust incident perimeter to ensure scene security/safety.

G. Evaluate situation and incident progress, providing updates to planning section.

- **I.** Location, status, and assignment of resources.
- **II.** Effectiveness of strategies and tactics.
- **III.** Necessary mitigation measures or precautions.
- **IV.** Desired contingency plans.

H. Determine need and request additional resources or support.

I. Notify logistics group of logistical challenges or communication issues.

J. Keep safety officer involved in tactical decision-making and changes needed to safety plan or messages.

K. Keep incident commander apprised of status of operational efforts.

L. Notify liaison officer of issues concerning cooperating and assisting organizations or agency resources.

M. Attend planning meetings. Be prepared to participate in discussions on strategies, tactics, and operational progress, as well as resource concerns or needs. The agenda for planning meetings should be based on the needs of your organization and the incident, however a sample planning agenda is provided.

N. Coordinate media field visits with the public information officer.

Planning

A. Obtain briefing from incident commander:

- **I.** Determine current resource status.
- **II.** Determine current situation status/intelligence.
- **III.** Determine current incident objectives and strategy.
- **IV.** Determine if the incident commander requires a written incident action plan.
- **V.** Determine time and location of first planning meeting.

B. Activate planning section positions, as necessary to support response efforts.

C. Establish and maintain a resource tracking system/process. This should include a means of determining and tracking currently working, on-call, or other available resources (native crews, contract crews, mutual aid, support staff, etc.). Review process for calling in assistance from outside the organization to determine information needs for making requests and onboarding outside resources. For significant storm or hurricane events that provide some prior warning, safe resource staging should be considered as well as challenges with transportation of resources.

D. Advise incident commander or key staff of any significant changes in incident status or conditions. Identify precautionary measures that may be taken.

E. Compile and display incident status summary information, if appropriate.

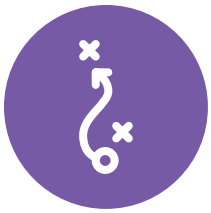
F. Forward incident status summaries to organization leadership at the required frequency if applicable. Provide copies to the organization's public information officer.

G. Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for operations, the incident command post, and/or Emergency Operations Center, as applicable. Obtain/develop additional relevant incident data or information such as incident area geographic maps, substation/transmission/feeder maps, and phasing diagrams. Determine needs for hard copies of maps or printed materials.

H. Prepare contingency plans that support alternate strategies at the direction of the
incident commander:

- **I.** Review current and projected incident and resource status.
- **II.** Identify resources required to implement contingency plan.
- **III.** Document alternatives for presentation to incident commander and operations, and for inclusion in the written incident action plan.

I. Determine if continuity of operations plans need to be activated based on the impact of the incident. Gather information on safety and security issues at all significant utility facilities, materials storage facilities, etc. to discuss with incident commander.



Planning Continued

J. Meet with operations/command, prior to planning meetings, to discuss proposed strategy and tactics, as well as the incident organizational chart and resource location.

K. Conduct planning meetings at the determined frequency. The agenda for this meeting should be based on the needs of your organization and the incident type, however a sample planning agenda is provided as a starting point.

L. Supervise preparation and distribution of the written incident action plan, if needed. Verify that all support and resource needs are coordinated with logistics prior to release of the incident action plan.

M. Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for use in preparing the incident action plan.

N. Coordinate incident action plan changes with general staff personnel and distribute written changes, as appropriate.

O. Coordinate preparation of the safety message with the safety officer.

P. Support incident information requirements including coordinating reporting schedules for all groups engaged in the incident. This may include progress updates from operations, periodic predictions on incident potential, weather data, resource challenges, or special equipment availability.

Q. Ensure the planning section has adequate coverage and relief staffing.

R. Conduct preparation of a demobilization plan, if appropriate. This should cover all details necessary to ensure the orderly release/replenishing of resources so they are returned to their home location in a ready-to-use state. For crewing resources, this should include the order of release of mutual aid, contractor, and native resources, taking into consideration cost and distance from home location. This should also include a plan for return to
routine operations.

S. Ensure all incident documentation is adequately and securely stored in accordance with your document retention and security policies.

T. Continue to monitor and provide summaries of resource status, including those currently working and those that may have become available (mutual aid, contractor, etc.).

Logistics

A. Obtain briefing from incident commander.

- **I.** Review situation and resource status for number of personnel assigned to incident.
- **II.** Review current organization chart.
- **III.** Determine which incident facilities have been/should be activated (e.g., Emergency Operations Center).

B. Ensure Emergency Operations Center or incident command post and other incident facilities are physically activated, as appropriate. The setup of an Emergency Operations Center may include:

- **I.** A large conference room with nearby breakout rooms for smaller groups.
- **II.** Adequate access to internet (i.e., wi-fi) and phone communications (e.g., landlines or adequate cell service). Cell service may require external antennas and cell boosters or repeaters.
- **III.** Laptops, personal computers, or the ability to connect to printers, projectors/screens, and networks with laptops that may be brought in by responding personnel.
- **IV.** Adequate power strips, extension cords, battery supplies, and necessary cables, safely secured as to not pose a tripping hazard.
- **V.** Signage marking designated areas, facilitates, or resources.
- **VI.** Printers and copiers with additional paper and toner.
- **VII.** Projectors or dedicated TV monitors for Emergency Operations Center status/information screens, along with dedicated computers.
- **VIII.** Video playing equipment, if not already covered by items above.
- **IX.** Whiteboards ready for use, including a supply of markers and erasers as well as easels with paper and markers.
- **X.** Miscellaneous supplies; paper, markers, memory sticks/USB devices, blank files/file organizers, labels, etc.
- **XI.** Maps and system diagrams. Displayed contact information for incident personnel as well as emergency contact numbers (area hospitals, police, fire, etc.).
- **XII.** Processes for controlling access to the Emergency Operations Center location.
- **XIII.** Schedules for replenishing resources, providing meals/refreshments, etc.
- **XIV.** If in a location with backup generators, backup systems should be tested as early as practical. A list of issues with other equipment (printers, projectors, etc.) should be identified and prioritized to be addressed.
- **XV.** Parking and security of the parking area near the Emergency Operations Center should be considered. Snow or debris removal may also need to be addressed.

Logistics Continued

C. Confirm resource ordering process. Review materials and equipment status, as well as status of storm materials.

D. Develop or assess adequacy of incident communications plan (e.g., communication methods for all personnel involved in the incident, may include radios, cell phones, etc.).

E. Organize and staff the logistics section, as appropriate, and consider the need for facility security, communication/IT, supply, and transportation/ground support groups. Provide a summary of the kind and extent of support the logistics group may be asked to provide.

F. Attend planning meetings to develop plan for logistical needs. Participate in preparation of an incident action plan, as appropriate.

- **I.** Provide input on resource availability, support needs, identified shortages, and response timelines for key resources.
- **II.** Identify future operational needs (both current and contingency), in order to anticipate logistical requirements (i.e., food, lodging, fueling, equipment).
- **III.** Ensure an incident communications plan is prepared.
- **IV.** Ensure medical plan is prepared, if needed.
- **V.** Assist in the preparation of transportation plan, if needed.
- **VI.** Research availability of additional resources.
- **VII.** Be prepared to produce hard copies of materials or documents as needed.

Finance/Administration

A. Obtain briefing from incident commander.

- **I.** Current incident objectives.
- **II.** Participating/coordinating organizations or agencies.
- **III.** Anticipated duration/complexity of incident.
- **IV.** Determine any political considerations or sensitivities.
- **V.** Determine any memorandums of understand, cost sharing arrangements, or mutual aid agreements that may come into play.

B. Obtain briefing from organization leadership.

- **I.** Determine level of fiscal process required.
- **II.** Delegation of authority to incident commander for financial processes, particularly procurement (e.g. spend limits).
- **III.** Assess potential for legal claims arising out of incident activities.
- **IV.** Identify applicable financial guidelines and policies, constraints, and limitations.

C. Obtain briefing from the organization's finance/administration leadership.

- **I.** Identify financial requirements for planned and expected operations.
- **II.** Determine agreements in place for facilities, equipment, and materials.
- **III.** Confirm/establish procurement guidelines.
- **IV.** Determine procedure for establishing charge codes, ensure relevant groups are aware of the use of charge codes.
- **V.** Determine need for emergency cash and or procurement card payment systems and administer accordingly.
- **VI.** Identify important local contacts.
- **VII.** Identify relevant agency/local guidelines and processes. Specifically if a disaster declaration has been made or is likely.
- **VIII.** Obtain copies of all incident-related agreements, activated or not.
- **IX.** Determine potential for rental or contract services.
- **X.** Determine what information is being maintained regarding time records as the
  hosting utility and what additional information may be needed to reconcile invoices
  at a later date.

Finance/Administration Continued

D. Attend planning meeting.

- **I.** Provide financial and cost analysis input.
- **II.** Provide financial summary on labor, materials, and services.
- **III.** Prepare forecasts on costs to complete operations.
- **IV.** Provide cost benefit analysis, if requested.
- **V.** Obtain information on status of incident; planned operations; changes in objectives, use of personnel, or equipment; and local agency/political concerns.

E. Gather continuing information, which may include: equipment time, personnel time, accident reports, potential and existing claims, arrival and demobilization of personnel and equipment, status of supplies, and use agreements.

F. Initiate, maintain, and ensure completeness of documentation needed to support claims or use of emergency funds, including auditing and documenting labor, equipment, materials, and services.

- **I.** Labor: breakdown of work locations, hours, and rates for response personnel, mutual aid, contract personnel, and support staff.
- **II.** Equipment: breakdown of work locations, hours, and rates.
- **III.** Materials and supplies purchased or used from supporting organizations, including equipment, locations/physical space, and expendable supplies.
- **IV.** Initiate, maintain, and ensure completeness of documentation needed to support claims for injury and property damage. Injury information should be kept on contracted personnel formally assigned to the incident, as well as paid employees and mutual aid personnel.

G. Ensure that all personnel time records reflect incident activity and that records for non-organization personnel (especially foreign crews and contractors) are transmitted and processed according to policy.

H. Assist logistics in resource procurement by identifying vendors for which open purchase orders or contracts must be established. Negotiate ad hoc contracts as needed.

I. Coordinate finance/administration demobilization, processing and storing all relevant documentation as per organizational policy.

Safety Officer

A. Obtain briefing from incident commander.

B. Identify hazardous situations or conditions associated with the incident. Ensure adequate levels of protective equipment are available and being used.

C. Staff and organize the safety function, as appropriate:

- **I.** For an incident involving multiple departments/functional areas, consider the use of an assistant safety officer for each group.
- **II.** Multiple high-risk operations may require an assistant safety officer at each site.
- **III.** Debrief assistant safety officers prior to planning meetings.

D. Complete your organization's process for identifying and mitigating hazards associated with the current conditions and type of work.

E. Identify mitigation measures or corrective actions where needed. Ensure implementation or appropriate precautions and corrective actions are shared with command and operations.

F. Participate in planning meetings and other meetings where potential tactics are being discussed.

- **I.** Listen to tactical options being considered to identify potential hazards or unsafe conditions. Assist in identifying options, protective actions, or alternate tactics.
- **II.** Discuss injuries or near-misses to date. Conduct appropriate investigation or documentation measures. Make recommendations on preventative or corrective actions.
- **III.** Prepare safety and risk analysis for the incident action plan. Develop a safety message to be shared with response personnel.

G. Coordinate critical incident stress, near-misses, hazardous conditions, hazardous materials, and other debriefings, as necessary.

H. Ensure safety equipment at incident locations is adequate.

Liaison Officer

A. Obtain briefing from incident commander.

- **I.** Obtain summary of incident organization (organizational chart).
- **II.** Determine organizations/agencies already involved in the incident, and whether they are assisting (have tactical equipment and/or personnel assigned to the organization), or cooperating (operating in a support mode "outside" the organization).

B. Obtain currently cooperating and assisting organization/agency information, including:

- **I.** Contact person(s).
- **II.** Radio frequencies.
- **III.** Phone numbers.
- **IV.** Cooperative agreements/memorandums of understanding/contracts.
- **V.** Resource type.
- **VI.** Number of personnel.
- **VII.** Condition of personnel and equipment.
- **VIII.** Organization constraints/limitations.

C. Notify city or county emergency management agencies of pre-planning or response activities as soon as practical. Determine liaison needs with county or municipal emergency operation centers.

D. Establish workspace for liaison function and notify outside representatives of location.

E. Contact and brief assisting/cooperating organizations or agency representatives.

F. Interview outside organization/agency representatives concerning objectives, resources and capabilities, and restrictions on use. Provide this information at planning meetings.

G. Work with public information officer and incident commander to coordinate media releases associated with inter-organization/agency cooperation issues.

H. Monitor incident operations to identify potential inter-organizational problems. Keep command apprised of such issues. Bring complaints pertaining to logistical problems, inadequate communications, and strategic and tactical direction to the attention of the incident commander.

I. Participate in planning meetings. Be prepared to share concerns or offers of resources from third parties.

Public Information Officer

A. Obtain briefing from incident commander.

- **I.** Determine the current status of incident.
- **II.** Identify current organization.
- **III.** Determine point of contact for media (on-scene or elsewhere).
- **IV.** Determine current media presence.

B. Coordinate with organization or municipal leadership to:

- **I.** Determine constraints on information process.
- **II.** Determine pre-existing agreements for information centers, joint information centers (JICs), joint press releases, etc.
- **III.** Determine if circumstances require that the responding organizations assess need for special alert and warning efforts, including the hearing impaired, non-English speaking populations, or areas especially at risk for a specific hazard, or which may need advance notice. If required, coordinate the development of door-to-door protective action statements with operations and the incident commander.

C. Prepare initial information summary as soon as possible after activation. If no other information is available, consider using the following general statement:

> **Sample Initial Information Summary**
> *We are aware that an [incident] involving [type of incident] occurred at approximately [time/day], in the vicinity of [general location}. [Organization personnel] are responding, and we will have additional information available as we are able to confirm it. We will hold a briefing at [location], and will notify the press at least ½ hour prior to the briefing. At this time, this briefing is the only place where officials authorized to speak about the incident and confirmed information will be available. Thank you for your assistance.*
>
> Note: for additional script examples refer to the American Public Power Association's Storm Communications Toolkit, referenced in the Resources for Plan Development and Maintenance section of this document.

D. Arrange for necessary work space, materials, telephones, and staff. Consider assigning assistant public information officers to the scene and or a joint information center (JIC).

E. Establish contact with local and national media representatives, as appropriate.

F. Establish location of information center for media and public away from operations.

Public Information Officer Continued

G. Establish schedule for news briefings.

- **I.** Provide coordinated information to customer call centers.
- **II.** Provide coordinated information to be provided to commercial/industrial customers as needed. Determine the best method to answer questions and deal with the concerns of critical and important customers.

H. Coordinate with logistics on the activation and staffing of message center "rumor control" lines to receive requests and answer questions from the public.

I. Obtain current incident status reports from planning section; coordinate a schedule for updates.

- **I.** Ensure customer service/call center staff have the same information and can address customer inquiries in a consistent way.
- **II.** Determine the need to increase call center staffing or alternate arrangements should normal communications channels be busy or down.
- **III.** Determine methods of dealing with rumors and sensitive issues that may be private to the company or involve private customer information.

J. Observe constraints on the release of information imposed by the incident commander and according to organization policy/guidance.

K. Obtain approval for information release from incident commander.

- **I.** Confirm details to ensure no conflicting information is released.
- **II.** Identify site and time for press briefings, and confirm participation by other response personnel.

L. Release news to media, and post information in command post and other appropriate locations.

- **I.** Record all interviews and copy all news releases. Contact media to correct erroneous or misleading information being provided to the public.

M. Coordinate information releases with PIO and related staff from other impacted organizations, agencies, and jurisdictions. Ensure that information provided to the public is consistent across jurisdictional boundaries, when appropriate.

N. Attend planning meetings, taking note of information that may impact the timing or contents of media releases.

O. Respond to special requests for information.

P. Confirm the process for the release of information concerning incident-related injuries or deaths.

Q. Provide all news releases, bulletins, and summaries to the planning section to be stored in accordance with your organizations record retention policies.

Sample Planning Meeting Agenda

Agenda Item	Responsible Party
Briefing on situation/resource status	Planning/Operations
Discuss safety issues	Safety Officer
Set/confirm incident objectives	Incident Commander
Determine incident boundaries/work areas	Operations
Specify tactics for each operational group	Operations
Specify resources needed for each group	Operations/Planning
Specify facilities and reporting locations	Ops./Planning/Logistics
Develop resource order	Logistics
Consider communications/medical/transportation plans	Logistics/Planning
Provide financial update	Finance/Administration
Discuss inter-organization liaison issues	Liaison Officer
Discuss information issues/concerns	Public Information Officer
Finalize, approve, and implement incident action plan	Incident Commander/All