



Regional Emergency Support Function #5 Information and Planning

Regional Coordination Organization:

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Emergency Management Agencies From COG Member Jurisdictions:

District of Columbia
Alexandria
Arlington County
Bowie
College Park
Fairfax
Fairfax County
Falls Church
Frederick County
Gaithersburg
Greenbelt
Loudoun County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County
Prince William County
Rockville
Takoma Park

Liaisons From All Regional Emergency Support Functions:

#1—Transportation;
#2—Communications Infrastructure;
#3—Public Works and Engineering;
#4—Fire, Technical Rescue, and Hazardous Materials Operations (includes R-ESF #4, #9 and #10);
#6—Mass Care;
#7—Resource Support;
#8—Health, Mental Health, and Medical Services;
#9—Technical Rescue (included in R-ESF #4);
#10—Hazardous Materials (included in R-ESF #4);
#11—Food;
#12—Energy;
#13—Law Enforcement;
#14—Media Relations and Communications Outreach; and
#15—Volunteer and Donation Management.

State Government Coordinating Organizations

District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency
Maryland Emergency Management Agency
Virginia Department of Emergency Management

Federal Government Organizations

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Office of Personnel Management
General Services Administration
Architect of Capitol
U.S. Capitol Police
U.S. Supreme Court

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

Regional Emergency Support Function (R-ESF) #5—Information and Planning facilitates the collection, processing, and dissemination of information among regional jurisdictions and organizations before, during, and after a regional incident or regional emergency. This function enhances substantive regional dialogue and communication by facilitating information sharing with all of the R-ESFs, and others, as necessary in an integrated and coordinated manner.

B. Scope

1. R-ESF #5 is the Information and Planning element of the regional communication and coordination effort.
2. A large number of situations occur daily throughout the metropolitan Washington region that may have emergency characteristics. Most of these are handled locally through existing operational systems and procedures within public- and private-sector individual and community organizations. Some require intervention of police, fire, emergency services, emergency management, and other public safety organizations.

The threats/hazards may include natural hazards, such as droughts and severe storms, as well as human-induced hazards, such as accidents and explosions. The consequences of these events can affect one jurisdiction, multiple jurisdictions, or the entire region. It is very difficult to scientifically categorize events in a way that would lead to a conclusion in each and every case that the event is regional in nature. Incidents may range from minor to catastrophic, but most in the middle require a high degree of subjectivity and judgment. For additional guidance, please refer to the Baseline Plan for a definition of regional incidents and regional emergencies.

3. The efforts required to gather, assess, and share information about potential threats and hazards are directly related to the speed of onset, magnitude, and severity of impact on people and structures. In most cases, existing local systems, procedures, incident logs, and situation reports will be adequate. Most incidents will not have regional implications. It is expected that existing procedures and reporting requirements between local and state governments and federal agencies, especially as they relate to requesting assistance from higher levels, will be followed.

4. Situations that have potential or actual demonstrated regional consequences will require information collection and sharing from a regional perspective. R-ESF #5 will use existing local, state, and federal information systems and capabilities as necessary to develop regional information. A regional incident tracking system will be used to augment these existing systems to help collect, summarize, and disseminate this information.
5. The Regional Information Communication and Coordination System (RICCS) will be used to facilitate this process. Refer to RICCS protocols for more on this subject.
6. The Regional Incident Impact Assessment System. This system, consisting of a series of analytical impact assessment tools, will be provided by COG and subject matter experts to R-ESF #5 to assist during regional incidents and regional emergencies.

II. Policies

- A. R-ESF #5 will not usurp or override the policies of any federal agency, state government, or local government or jurisdiction.
- B. R-ESF #5 engages as needed before, during, and after a regional incident or regional emergency.
- C. R-ESF #5 facilitates information and planning activities in support of COG members and regional leadership.
- D. R-ESF #5 coordinates information and planning activities with R-ESF liaisons to R-ESF #5, and other R-ESF group members as necessary.
- E. R-ESF #5 coordinates information and planning activities with local emergency communication centers (ECCs) and emergency operations centers (EOCs) when they are activated.
- F. R-ESF #5 will facilitate a regional assessment of the situation by bringing together representatives from affected jurisdictions and knowledgeable experts from appropriate R-ESFs.
- G. R-ESF #5 will collect, track, and disseminate information that is relevant to one or more R-ESFs or jurisdictions, and in so doing it contributes to the overall perspective of the regional incident or regional emergency.
- H. R-ESF #5 shares information with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, and other regional partners.

- I. R-ESF #5 will provide information for use by R-ESF #14 for informing the media and the general public about the regional incident or regional emergency.

III. Situation

A. Regional Emergency Condition

A regional incident or regional emergency may be of such severity and magnitude as to require a special set of actions to facilitate communication and coordination among regional decision makers. R-ESF #5 will provide timely and appropriate incident information before, during, and after an incident to support local jurisdictions and organizations in determining appropriate actions based on the collective regional knowledge of the situation. R-ESF #5 will also support information sharing across jurisdictions related to the need for regional, state, or federal assistance.

B. Planning Assumptions

1. Sharing information before, during, and after a regional incident or regional emergency will add value to the response and recovery efforts.
2. In a regional incident or regional emergency, there is a need for a process, whereby situational information can be received, compiled, and assessed by the impacted jurisdiction, and distributed for use by other potentially affected jurisdictions, R-ESF functional members, and other partners across the region.
3. A regional incident tracking system will be established.
4. There are needs for accurate, reliable, and credible information to be received in a timely manner and on a continuous basis.
5. Initial detection and reporting of a regional incident or regional emergency can come from any source, but must be validated and assessed by responsible officials.
6. Existing local and state 24-hour ECCs will be used to the fullest extent possible for initial reporting, assessing, and tracking of regional incidents and regional emergencies.
7. Ongoing information and planning activities will require 24-hour operations capability.
8. Redundant capabilities are needed to ensure R-ESF #5 functional capability.

IV. Concept of Coordination

A. General

1. Initial notification of an incident may come from any source, including the media, individual citizens, the general public, private sector bodies, as well as governmental organizations. Ultimately, most incidents will have little or no regional significance. However, if the potential for regional consequences exists, it is critical that information about that incident be systematically collected and assessed. R-ESF #5 facilitates this information coordination process.

R-ESF #5's primary responsibility resides within the local and state emergency management community, which has ECCs operating on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week basis. They have monitoring capability and standardized systems and procedures for dealing with emergencies. They are a part of the federal, state, and local emergency management community that exists nationwide. In order to augment this capability from a regional perspective, a regional incident tracking system will be used.

2. Every R-ESF has a mutual information-sharing responsibility and relationship with R-ESF #5. To maximize awareness opportunities and insure effective coordination of responding agencies, R-ESF #5 will receive all RICCS messages and should be copied on all messages pertaining to a regional incident or regional emergency that may originate within a functional R-ESF. The R-ESF liaisons will be responsible for insuring that information and messages from their R-ESF are provided to R-ESF #5. Each R-ESF has appointed a liaison to R-ESF #5 for information management purposes. This liaison is responsible for assuring that information from and about their R-ESF is included in the regional incident tracking system.
3. R-ESF #5 will begin tracking the incident and gather, record, and share essential elements of information (EElS) to facilitate coordinated activities. Critical information will be reported to R-ESF #5 as it develops, and initial reports will include such information as follows:

- Originating entity;
- Type of event;
- Location of the event;
- Time of event;
- Scope of the event;
- Affected jurisdictions;

Affected populations;
Affected facilities;
Activities under way;
Potential Impacts; and
Recommendations (conference calls, etc.).

4. R-ESF #5 has the ability to convene liaisons from R-ESFs to provide advice and information from their respective functional areas related to a developing or ongoing situation. In some cases it may be necessary to bring together “experts” in a particular functional area to develop an accurate assessment and analysis of potential regional impacts and provide recommendations.
5. These local and state emergency management agencies impacted by the event and engaged in response activities will provide information about the situation to R-ESF #5. R-ESF #5 will use this information to develop composite regional situation reports as required.
6. R-ESF #5 shall work in close coordination with the local, state, and federal ESF #5 communities as necessary. In circumstances where the situation involves or has the potential to involve the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal agencies under the Federal Response Plan (FRP), R-ESF #5 will facilitate information-sharing relationships as required.
7. R-ESF #5 will make information available to local jurisdictions on a regular basis, using any and all modes of available communications, so that accurate and timely information is available to regional decision makers. The regional incident tracking system and the RICCS will be the primary systems used for this purpose.
8. Actual duration of R-ESF #5 activities will be determined by the situation and the need for collection and dissemination of relevant information. If required, R-ESF #5 operations can continue in shifts for an extended period of time.

B. Organization

1. The primary R-ESF #5 organization consists of the 17 local COG member jurisdictions’ emergency management agencies and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

2. The support organization consists of liaison members from each of the other R-ESFs who will provide for information sharing, technical advice, assessment, and expertise.
3. The specific organizational structure for R-ESF #5 during any event will be determined by the type and size of the event and the extent of information-sharing requirements. Impacted jurisdictions can request augmentation from other jurisdictions to assist them with regional information collection and dissemination responsibilities.
4. It may be necessary to have R-ESF #5 perform additional functions or services, in order to fulfill the regional aspects of the information and planning function. However, R-ESF #5 will not duplicate federal, state, or local ESF #5 organizations' capabilities to provide these services.
5. Traditional information and planning organizational structures and capabilities (federal, state, and local) that would usually be available in a catastrophic regional event may include:

Situation status updates, including collecting, analyzing, and displaying information; preparing situation reports; and preparing status briefings;

Planning support, including daily action planning; contingency planning, and long-range planning;

Documentation, including collecting all reports, maintaining archival records, and preparing after-action reports; and

Technical services, including GIS and mapping support; subject-matter expertise; and information technology systems and support.

C. Notification

1. The notification of a regional incident or regional emergency to R-ESF #5 can come from any source. Since R-ESF #5 is resident within the 24-hour ECCs at the local and state level, the function is always activated.
2. If a particular R-ESF or jurisdiction is engaged in any non-RICCS dialogue about a regional incident or regional emergency that impacts, or appears to impact, only its own area of responsibility, it must be sure to copy R-ESF #5 on these communications. This may be accomplished by placing every ESF #5 member on RICCS alerts.
3. R-ESF #5 will follow standard RICCS protocols, as appropriate for the incident, to notify R-ESF #5 primary members and supporting liaison members from other R-ESFs and jurisdictions, to facilitate information sharing.

4. R-ESF #5 notifications will be accomplished using the most expedient and appropriate means possible. Normally this will be a RICCS Alert.
5. Sensitive information will be transmitted with an appropriate degree of security, and use of such information may need to be restricted.

D. Coordination

1. Initial Actions

R-ESF #5—Information and Planning activities begin with the initial notification of a regional incident or regional emergency. In some instances, this could precede the onset of a regional incident or regional emergency (e.g., during an approaching hurricane), when R-ESF #5 may operate a small monitoring function as part of existing local and state monitoring operations. In extreme cases, with the sudden occurrence of a catastrophic event, the demands placed on R-ESF #5 for initial information may be extraordinary. When state and local emergency operations centers (EOCs) are activated or when disaster field offices (DFOs) are established, as a result of a state or federal disaster or emergency declaration, the federal ESF #5 becomes operational. R-ESF #5 should coordinate with operational ESF #5 activities whenever possible.

Information and planning activities may be taking place in one or more jurisdiction and/or at the state level;

Incident logs and situation reports will be developed and regional assessments will be taking place during this period; and

Information will be shared with jurisdictions and/or R-ESFs through conference calls arranged through the RICCS, or by postings on the Regional Incident Tracking System, or by meetings convened as necessary.

2. Continuing Actions

Information and planning activities continue as long as necessary to support the need for regional information, which means that R-ESF #5 must have sustainability over a long period of time. R-ESF #5 must develop an iterative capability to maintain current and accurate information during a dynamic emergency situation, where conditions change frequently. When there no longer is a need for regional information sharing and coordination, a transition to local jurisdictional

response should occur. This transition does not change the mission of R-ESF #5, nor does it affect the basic functions of information gathering, processing, dissemination, and planning. As the tempo of disaster operations slows, the level of effort for the R-ESF #5 function is gradually reduced, but support will continue as necessary.

The focus shifts to the economic impact of the regional emergency, the effectiveness of program delivery, and the identification of recovery issues. Normally, there will be an increased need for specific economic and demographic information;

The emphasis in planning during the recovery phase shifts from the daily action plan to long-range management plans. R-ESF #5 will assist in regional coordination and communication related to this planning. The information and planning function collates the information and facilitates the process;

Situation reporting and formal briefings should continue through the recovery phase, although the frequency of both should be gradually reduced; and

The scope and nature of the overall regional incident or regional emergency, current conditions, and potential concerns will dictate the level of R-ESF #5 organization and staffing.

3. Stand Down

Once the critical aspects of the regional incident or regional emergency have passed and regional information sharing is no longer necessary, the incident will be officially closed and R-ESF #5 will disengage.

4. After-action Critique

R-ESF #5 members will conduct an after-action critique to determine lessons learned and areas for improvement. This critique will be conducted as part of the RECP evaluation process explained in *Section VI Preparedness Cycle*.

V. Responsibilities

A. R-ESF #5 Participating and Supporting Agencies

COG will serve as the coordinator for R-ESF #5, providing such support as necessary and required. It will facilitate coordination and communication among

R-ESF #5 and all other R-ESFs, COG member jurisdictions, and other regional partners. COG will ensure that current technologies and systems are made available and maintained.

R-ESF #5 membership will consist of the 17 local COG member jurisdiction emergency management agencies (includes DCEMA), Virginia DEM and Maryland EMA.

R-ESF #5 membership includes liaison members from all of the other R-ESFs. Basically all R-ESFs have information and planning responsibility; they are all members of R-ESF #5 by virtue of their respective liaisons.

B. Essential Elements of Information

Participating agencies are responsible for providing information about regional incidents or regional emergencies that relate to their functional areas of responsibility. This information sharing will be accomplished through RICCS to R-ESF #5. General EEIs have been selected, across R-ESF lines, as the information categories necessary to describe the regional incident or emergency in a coordinated manner. The general EEIs follow:

- Location of alternate EOC;
- Status of key contractor support;
- Availability of critical support resources; both in times of availability and amount of personnel and equipment;
- Location of the impacted area;
- Social, economic, and political impacts;
- Jurisdictional boundaries involved;
- Status of transportation systems and critical transportation facilities;
- Status of communications systems;
- Major equipment needed;
- Access points to the disaster area;
- Status of operating facilities;
- Hazard-specific information;
- Weather data affecting operations;
- Seismic or other geophysical information;
- Status of critical facilities and distribution systems;
- Status of remote sensing and reconnaissance activities;
- Status of key personnel;
- Status of R-ESF activation;
- Status of disaster or emergency declaration;
- Major issues and activities of R-ESFs;
- Resource shortfalls and status of critical resources;
- Overall priorities for response;
- Status of upcoming activities;
- Donations;

Historical and demographic information;
Status of energy systems;
Estimates of potential impacts based on predictive modeling (as applicable);
Status (statistics) on recovery programs (human services, infrastructure, Small Business Administration);
Status and analysis of initial assessments (needs assessments and damage assessments, including preliminary damage assessments); and
Status of efforts under federal emergency operations plans, if known.

More specifically, each R-ESF has agreed upon certain specific EEIs as they affect its area of responsibility. Please refer to each R-ESF annex for that function's specific EEIs.

VI. Preparedness Cycle

The Preparedness Cycle is a means of assuring a high level of readiness for the RECP through continuous improvement in the plans and procedures. The cycle begins with sound planning practices, followed by training of personnel who will be engaged in executing those plans. When personnel have been trained, plans and procedures are tested through exercises or simulations designed to check planning assumptions against a range of scenarios. The performance of the respective organizations is evaluated as a means of refining the plans, and the cycle repeats. The COG-sponsored Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Committee (DEPC), which includes emergency managers from COG member jurisdictions, VDEM, MEMA, and regional public safety representatives, is responsible for maintaining the Preparedness Cycle for R-ESF #5.

A. Planning

1. The COG Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Committee is responsible for coordinating planning under R-ESF #5, including review and recommending revisions of the R-ESF #5 Annex. Liaisons from all regional emergency support functions will contribute to the planning of R-ESF #5.
2. Planning will include a comprehensive assessment of current capabilities for collecting, assessing, and sharing regional information.

B. Training

Ongoing and scheduled training related to the overall RECP, specific R-ESF #5 staff responsibilities, and R-ESF #5 interactions with other RESF liaisons will be developed and carried out.

C. Exercises

In order for the RECP to be effective, a series of information and planning simulations/exercises are to be conducted on a regularly scheduled basis. The exercise series includes tabletop exercises, functional communications and coordination drills, and field exercises conducted by COG or other organizations.

D. Evaluation

In order to ensure continuous improvement in the information and planning function and in the RECP, the plans, policies, and procedures that support proficiency are evaluated through real-world experience and exercises.

E. Corrective Action

Lessons learned from exercises and real world experiences will be captured in a corrective action system and the issues tracked to ensure that they are resolved and incorporated into plan revisions as appropriate.

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