

# Regional Emergency Coordination Plan

Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments

Task Force on Homeland Security  
and Emergency Preparedness for  
the National Capital Region



September 11, 2002



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# Regional Emergency Coordination Plan

**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments**  
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## Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) Executive Summary

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit association representing local governments in the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's members are the elected officials from 17 local governments in the National Capital Region, plus area delegation members from the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives.

This plan applies to the National Capital Region, which is defined as the District of Columbia, including the Supreme Court and the United States Capitol; Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties in Virginia; and all cities existing in Maryland or Virginia within the geographic area designated by the outer boundaries of the combined counties listed in United States Code [40 USC 71 (b)]. For the purposes of this plan, the term *region* is expanded to include Frederick County in Maryland and thus include all COG member jurisdictions.

COG provides a focus for action and develops sound regional responses to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, human services, population growth, public safety, and transportation.

The events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent anthrax attacks in the Washington area, have highlighted the need for a regional coordination plan that has new policies, protocols, and procedures to improve coordination and communication in anticipation of potential future regional emergencies. Under the auspices of COG's Ad Hoc Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for the National Capital Region, this Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) has been developed to facilitate coordination and communication for regional incidents or regional emergencies.

**Purpose and Scope.** The purpose of the RECP is to provide a structure through which the National Capital Region can collaborate on planning, communication, information sharing and coordination activities before, during, and after a regional emergency. The scope of the plan is deliberately broad, intended to include the activities and capabilities of all organizations, government, and business that might have a role in anticipating or responding to major threats or hazards in the region.

The plan is scalable, allowing for an appropriate level of coordination and information exchange to deal with a regional emergency.

**Organization of the RECP.** The RECP design is based on the functional structure of the Federal Response Plan. The first section is the Baseline Plan. The Baseline Plan covers the

purpose, scope, roles and relationships among member organizations as they relate to regional communication, coordination, and information sharing. The centerpiece of this planning effort has been the creation of the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS), the Regional Incident Tracking System and Incident Impact Assessment System. The Plan also describes how the RICCS will facilitate this process.

To facilitate the sharing of information and coordination, 15 regional Emergency Support functional areas that may be needed during a regional emergency have been identified. These 15 Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs) will allow for the channeling of the large amount of information gathered in a regional emergency into discrete, definable areas with common terminology for jurisdictions to share information with others in the region. In addition to the Baseline Plan and 15 R-ESFs, the RECP also contains supporting annexes and appendices.

**Content of the RECP.** It is assumed that a regional incident or regional emergency could cause numerous fatalities and injuries, property loss, and disruption of normal life support systems. It may have a major impact on the regional economic, physical, and social infrastructures. A further assumption is that a large number of casualties, damage to buildings and basic infrastructure, and disruption of essential public services could overwhelm the capabilities of individual jurisdictions to meet the needs of the situation.

The RECP was developed as a tool to assist the local, state, federal, and private sector partners in coordinating their response to regional incidents and regional emergencies including a major regional incident or regional emergency. The RECP will not usurp or infringe on the authorities, plans, or procedures of any participating jurisdiction, agency, or organization. All necessary decisions affecting response, recovery, protective actions, public health and safety advisories, etc., will be made by responsible officials under their existing authorities, policies, plans, and procedures.

Establishing common terminology and structuring the plan for compatibility with accepted local, state, and federal emergency plans improve efficiency and effectiveness in regional communications and coordination. Emergency response decisions will be enhanced by the availability of timely and accurate information. The plan will focus on regional communication, to provide this timely and accurate information that facilitates regional coordination.

**Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS).** The RICCS provides a system for COG members, the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the federal government, public agencies, the private sector and volunteer organizations, and schools and universities to collaborate in planning, communication, information sharing, and coordination activities before, during, and after a regional incident or regional emergency.

Based on the threat level, local, state, and federal agencies will implement appropriate protective measures. The RICCS is a tool that can be used to share information regionally about what protective measures have been taken. The RICCS is a virtual system with multiple capabilities that was designed to facilitate regional communication. Participating organizations will use multiple means of communication, including conference calling, secure websites, and wireless communication systems.

The RICCS is not intended to supersede, replace, or duplicate the existing communications and information sharing that routinely occurs among federal, state, and local emergency management organizations. Rather, it is intended to focus on information and coordination from the regional perspective.

**Concurrent Implementation.** The RECP will be implemented only at the call of its participants and can be applied before, during, or after a regional incident or regional emergency concurrently with other local, state, and federal plans. Operational authority will remain with the jurisdictions and appropriate operational authority will remain within state and Federal control.

**Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESF).** An R-ESF is a basic function shared by all jurisdictions. Individual R-ESFs identify organizations with resources and capabilities for a particular type of assistance or requirement frequently needed in a large-scale emergency or disaster. Each of the R-ESFs uses the same format to identify participant organizations, establish basic policies and planning assumptions that will guide activities, and explain how they will communicate and coordinate with each other and with other regional partners. A short synopsis of the content of each R-ESF to be used before, during, and after a regional incident or regional emergency follows:

**R-ESF #1: Transportation**—facilitates communication and coordination among regional jurisdictions and agencies concerning regional transportation issues and activities before, during, and after a regional incident or emergency.

**R-ESF #2: Communications Infrastructure**—ensures the coordination and communication of information concerning hardware and capacity for interoperability.

**R-ESF #3: Public Works and Engineering**—ensures an effective and timely response to regional public emergencies concerning regional water supply (including potable water and ice), wastewater (including wastewater treatment), and solid waste and debris management.

**R-ESF #4: Fire, Technical Rescue, and Hazardous Materials Operations**—facilitates communication and coordination among regional jurisdictions

concerning regional firefighting and EMS, technical rescue, and hazardous materials operations issues and activities. Note: R-ESFs #4, #9, and #10 are structurally the same and are all contained in R-ESF #4.

**R-ESF #5: Information and Planning**—facilitates the collection, processing, and dissemination of information among regional jurisdictions and organizations. 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.

**R-ESF #6: Mass Care**—promotes and ensures a coordinated regional capability to provide mass care assistance to victims that have been impacted by a regional incident or regional emergency, including a weapons of mass destruction event.

**R-ESF #7: Resource Support**—facilitates communication and support among regional jurisdictions to assist in the effective and timely coordination of resources following an emergency.

**R-ESF #8: Health, Mental Health, and Medical Services**—facilitates communication, cooperation, and coordination among local and state jurisdictions and a vast array of hospitals, social workers, and private-practice physicians concerning regional health, mental health, and medical services issues and activities.

**R-ESF #9: Technical Rescue**—R-ESFs #4, #9, and #10 are structurally the same and are all contained in R-ESF #4.

**R-ESF #10: Hazardous Materials**—R-ESFs #4, #9, and #10 are structurally the same and are all contained in R-ESF #4.

**R-ESF #11: Food**—facilitates the procurement, storage, transportation, and distribution of food provisions and food stamps and also feeding assistance. R-ESF #11 works in conjunction with and in continuance of the mass-feeding activities performed under R-ESF #6: Mass Care.

**R-ESF # 12: Energy**—ensures an effective and timely response to public emergencies that affect the regional energy infrastructure (including the supply and delivery of electricity, natural gas, and petroleum fuels).

**R-ESF #13: Law Enforcement**—facilitates communication and information coordination among regional jurisdictions concerning law enforcement issues and activities.

**R-ESF #14: Media Relations and Communications Outreach**—provides accurate, authoritative, and timely regional information to news media representatives, thereby supporting other regional partners as they work to protect the health and safety of citizens.

**R-ESF #15: Donations and Volunteer Management**—facilitates the communications and coordination among regional jurisdictions and agencies regarding the need for and availability of donations and volunteer services.

**Support Annexes.** To augment the Baseline Plan, 11 Support Annexes will provide detailed information on specific topics. The Support Annexes include descriptive briefs on the following:

(1) **Animal Protection**—lists the governmental, private sector, and non-governmental agencies involved; the need and purpose for this function; the situations and conditions for this function; the planning assumptions, the coordination capability; and the responsibilities of the participant organizations.

(2) **Business Continuity**—identifies the impact of potential loss of services in the event of a regional incident or regional emergency; formulates and implements viable recovery strategies; develops recovery plan(s) to ensure continuity of organizational services; and administers a comprehensive training, testing, and maintenance program. This Support Annex will be developed at a later date.

(3) **Credentialing**—provides an overview of actions taken to date regarding credentialing protocols within the National Capital Region to ensure proper access to an incident or emergency site by authorized individuals.

(4) **Disease Surveillance**—discusses the governmental and private sector health organizations; purposes and policies; description of the situation, including regional emergency conditions and planning assumptions; concept of coordination; responsibilities of the participating and supporting agencies; the preparedness cycle; and an analysis of legal issues and recommended action. This Support Annex is currently in draft form.

(5) **Economic Recovery**—provides additional communication and coordination mechanisms that may be applied when the impact of an emergency requires a coordinated effort among member jurisdictions and other stakeholders for regional economic recovery. Work is ongoing on this Support Annex.

(6) **Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination Annex**—addresses the transportation aspects of moving people out of affected areas of the region and moving required resources into affected areas in anticipation of, and following a regional incident or regional emergency that requires large-scale evacuation. Work is ongoing on this Support Annex.

(7) **National Pharmaceutical Stockpile**—lists the local governmental and private sector health organizations in the region; the purpose and scope of the stockpile; policies, regional situation, including emergency conditions and planning assumptions; concept of coordination; responsibilities of the participating and supporting agencies; and the preparedness cycle.

(8) **Solid Waste and Debris Management**—addresses detailed issues including staging areas; mutual aid agreements; review of available resources; review of contracts already in place; requirements of regulatory agencies; monitoring data; contamination implications (i.e., biomedical, radioactive, and identifying locations/facilities that can accept contaminated waste); and disposal infrastructure/waste stream capacity and who controls that capacity. This Support Annex will be developed at a later date.

(9) **Protective Actions**—identifies steps taken to preserve the health and safety of emergency responders and the public during a public emergency and provides a framework under which the COG jurisdictions can coordinate their decisions. This support annex will be developed at a later date.

(10) **Terrorism**—addresses the unique communication and coordination aspects of dealing with a terrorist act and the crisis and consequence management relationships involved.

(11) **Water Supply Emergency Plan**—describes the 2002 Water Supply Emergency Plan and how it would effect communication and coordination regarding water supply in the event of a regional incident or regional emergency.

**Appendices.** In addition, there are six Appendices that provide detailed information on the following:

**A: Definitions and Acronyms**—a listing of the terms and organizations that are referenced in the RECP. Definitions are provided for unfamiliar terms and full organizational names as well as acronyms are listed.

**B: Catalog of Agreements**—a listing of mutual aid agreements developed among COG’s member jurisdictions. They include agreements related to public safety, fire/rescue, energy, transportation, weather, emergency alert system, water, and health.

**C: Authorities**—a listing of the various authorities that provide the legal basis for the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan. They are categorized as follows: Federal, Presidential Decision Directives, Homeland Security Presidential Directives, District of Columbia Codes Related to Emergency Planning and Operations, Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws, and Maryland Authorities.

**D: References**—includes citations and web site addresses, when available, for the various plans and organizations that are pertinent to the contents of the RECP.

**E: Hazards Affecting the Region**—a brief discussion of the type and nature of hazards and threats that have the greatest likelihood of affecting the region. A chart is also included.

**F: Liability and Indemnification**—includes key elements of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, and the Emergency Management Association Compact, which is an interstate mutual aid agreement that allows states to assist one another in responding to emergencies and disasters.

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**Letter from Chair COG Board of Directors**

September 2002

I am proud to present this Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) for the National Capital Region, prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

The terrorist attacks on September 11 and the anthrax contaminations in the Washington area highlighted the need for regional coordination in the event of a future incident or emergency. This plan represents the collective efforts of local, state, regional and federal agencies and organizations, each of which has its own plan for managing emergency response. Yet, they all recognize the benefit of working in concert to improve our preparedness for the National Capital Region.

COG has a long history of creating partnerships to provide research, planning and leadership in the areas of transportation, health, environment, economic development, housing and public safety. That history makes COG the natural choice for mobilizing the array of government and private sector agencies and organizations in the region whose response activities would intersect in the event of an assault on or threat to the region's security. The RECP provides for an unprecedented level of communication and coordination among those entities by addressing gaps in policies, procedures and protocols.

The plan details the lines of authority in each functional area and outlines the relevant information that must be gathered for effective decision-making and for crafting public messages. It addresses many areas including evacuation plans, communications interoperability, notification systems, animal control, and safeguards for public utilities. The result will be improved regional coordination in all areas involved in emergency response: public safety and emergency management, transportation, health, water and energy infrastructures, and communications.

Building on the lessons learned on September 11, 2001, we are confident that this plan moves us a step closer to a more secure and more prepared region. It is my hope that we may never have to use the plan for anything more than a weather or traffic emergency. But if we must, we will be ready.

Sincerely,



Bruce R. Williams  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

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Delegate James Scott

---

**Letter from Chair Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for the National Capital Region**

September 2002

The events of one fateful day in September exactly one year ago tested the National Capital Region's mettle like no other single event in history. Challenged as we were by the destruction of lives and property, and the economic and psychological effects, we emerged from the tragedy a stronger and more purposeful region and nation.

In the ensuing 12 months, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and its federal, state and private sector partners have marshaled an unprecedented, collaborative regional program focused on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. The Regional Emergency Coordination Plan that follows is the result of a process that has required us to look beyond our physical and mental boundaries toward common goals: protecting our citizenry and safeguarding the unique resources situated in this region. COG has served the region for 45 years as the venue for regional coordination and, thus far, it has performed no more important a task than ensuring that this area is better prepared for an attack or an emergency than we were on September 11, 2001.

I am extremely grateful to my colleagues on the Board of Directors who enthusiastically agreed to join me in leading COG's Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for the National Capital Region. We have made enormous strides in ensuring the protection of our jurisdictions and our citizens, so much so that this regional effort has been viewed as a model of preparedness. Also, I want to thank members of the Task Force, representing every sector of our community, who spent countless hours working with us in developing this plan and whose participation was invaluable. I am also grateful to the COG staff for their professionalism and strong commitment to the success of this effort.

The plan now before you is an improved and strengthened emergency response tool. It builds upon existing procedures, policies and standards that have served the region well through anticipated and unforeseen emergencies and incorporates new strategies for enhanced communication and coordination. The Regional Emergency Coordination Plan is a comprehensive, all hazards plan involving every level of government within the region and key private sector organizations.

It is an evolving document – a continuing work in progress – that must be tested, evaluated and, where needed, revised over time. Further, the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan is a

mechanism for maintaining relationships that have been strengthened this past year. I am confident the bonds that were built among the region's decision makers will sustain us through times of prosperity and challenge – both of which the future is certain to bring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol Schwartz". The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light yellow rectangular background.

Carol Schwartz  
Chair, Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness  
for the National Capital Region

---

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**FOREWORD**

The Washington area quickly mobilized to improve emergency preparedness, coordination and response. In response to the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors created a "Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for the National Capital Region." The Task Force was created in October 2001, and consists of representatives from the local, state, and federal governments, public sector agencies, and private and non-profit sector stakeholders. The Task Force and its subgroups have been meeting to establish and work on recommended actions, including the development of a Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP).

The Task Force recommended approval of a framework for the RECP at the COG Board on April 10, 2002. The COG Board unanimously approved the framework by resolution for review by local governments and other stakeholders while the Task Force continued to develop the plan in cooperation with Federal agencies, state and local governments, and the business community. The Board also approved the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Development and Maintenance of a Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) for the National Capital Region and for the utilization of the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS).

The RECP is consistent with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Federal Response Plan (FRP), and the District of Columbia's Disaster Response Plan (DRP). It addresses a broad spectrum of potential hazards from natural and human-induced hazards to terrorism. The National Capital Region is the first area in the country to prepare such a plan since the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The RECP identifies 15 areas of activity needed in the event of a regional emergency. The 15 areas divide vast amounts of information gathered in an emergency into discrete sections easily disseminated among regional jurisdictions. The functions are identified as Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs). This structure parallels that used in both the FRP and DRP, helping to ensure capability among local, state and federal efforts in the region.

On July 2, 2002, as part of its series of reports on homeland security, the General Accounting Office (GAO) issued a report entitled "Intergovernmental Coordination and Partnership will be Critical to Success" [GAO-02-900T] in which it gave special attention to the need to enhance the role and functions of regional organizations in emergency management. Two key paragraphs (with emphasis added) follow:

"Our fieldwork at federal agencies and at local governments suggests a shift is potentially underway in the definition of roles and responsibilities between federal, state and local

governments with far reaching consequences for homeland security and accountability to the public. The challenges posed by the new threats are prompting offices at all levels of government to rethink long-standing divisions of responsibilities for such areas as fire services, local infrastructure protection and airport security. **The proposals on the table recognize that the unique scale and complexity of these threats call for a response that taps the resources and capacities of all levels of government as well as the private sector.**" (p.8)

"Governments at the local level are also moving to rethink roles and responsibilities to address the unique scale and scope of the contemporary threats from terrorism. Numerous local general-purpose governments and special districts co-exist within metropolitan regions and rural areas alike. **Many regions are starting to assess how to restructure relationships among contiguous local entities to take advantage of economies of scale, promote resource sharing, and improve coordination of preparedness and response on a regional basis.**" (p. 9)

The RECP is on the forefront of such regional efforts, and therefore must remain a dynamic and flexible document that will change and mature with each update. In order for the plan to be effective, it must be challenged, tested and retested through real world operations and simulation exercises. It must reflect the knowledge gained from our experiences and lessons learned during disaster and emergency situations. I am confident that it will perform its function as a tool to improve communication and coordination among the 17 jurisdictions within COG and strengthen the region as a whole.



Michael C. Rogers  
Executive Director  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

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The Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination Annex was developed by The Louis Berger Group, Inc. with BMI, SG Associates, Travesky & Associates, and the Monterey Institute for Non-Proliferation Studies.

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The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments gratefully acknowledges the immeasurable contributions of dozens of public and private sector leaders who helped guide the preparation of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan. This work would not have been possible without their many hours of public service and abiding commitment to this project.

Michael C. Rogers  
COG Executive Director

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Gerry Connolly, Fairfax County; Robert Dorsey, City of Rockville; M.H. Jim Estepp, Prince George's County; Adrian Fenty, District of Columbia; Jay Fiset, Arlington County; Anthony Griffin, Fairfax County; Mary Hill, Prince William County; Margaret Kellems, District of Columbia; John Koskinen, District of Columbia; Charles Konigsberg, City of Alexandria; John Mason, City of Fairfax; Carol Schwartz, District of Columbia; David Snyder, City of Falls Church; Bruce Williams, City of Takoma Park.

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**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Development and Maintenance of a  
Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) for the National Capital Region  
and for Utilization of the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination  
System (RICCS)**

September 11, 2002

**WHEREAS**, in response to the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, the COG Board of Directors ("COG Board") convened a Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for the National Capital Region ("Task Force"), consisting of representatives from the local, state, federal governments, public sector agencies, and private and non-profit sector stakeholders; and

**WHEREAS**, federal, state and local governments and other public and private sector stakeholders agree that the region must have a coordinated homeland defense and security program with the capacity to respond with dispatch to the full spectrum of regional emergencies, including natural disasters, human-induced hazards, and terrorism; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 10, 2002, the COG Board approved the Task Force's Regional Emergency Coordination Plan Framework as the interim Regional Emergency Coordination Plan, and committed to adopt the full Regional Emergency Coordination Plan by September 2002; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan must be a living and evolving document, that will be strengthened and enhanced over time as it is exercised and tested; and

**NOW THEREFORE**, the signatory parties to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) hereby agree to the following:

1. To use the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan agreed to by the COG Board of Directors on September 11, 2002, in the event of a regional emergency.
2. To appoint representative(s) to participate in the emergency support work groups of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan under the auspices of the COG Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for the National Capital Region (Task Force) or successor organization. The appointees to the Task Force work groups shall be senior individuals having policy or technical knowledge required for further plan development.

3. To cooperatively maintain, through the Task Force (or successor organization) and its work groups, a comprehensive Regional Emergency Coordination Plan, and update supporting annexes as required for implementing the Plan.
4. To incorporate the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS) into agency/organization emergency response procedures to facilitate communication and coordination of the region's response to regional emergencies.
5. To cooperatively participate in exercises and drills to test and validate the Plan on a regular basis.
6. This MOU may be modified at any time with the written consent of authorized representatives of each signatory organization. Any signatory organization to this MOU may withdraw from it by providing COG a seven-day written notice of such action.
7. The MOU shall become effective immediately when it is executed by at least two participating jurisdictions each in Maryland and Virginia, and by the District of Columbia.

**SIGNATORIES TO THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON  
REGIONAL EMERGENCY COORDINATION PLAN  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Signatories to the RECP will be:

The Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) of the COG 17 member jurisdictions;

The COG Board of Directors;

The State Governors and/or State Emergency Management Directors;

Federal agencies;

Private sector organizations; and

Regional operating agencies.

