

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REGIONAL EMERGENCY COORDINATION PLANSM

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What is the Regional Emergency Coordination PlanSM?*

Developed under the auspices of COG, along with its federal, state, and private sector partners, the RECPSM is an all hazards emergency response plan that facilitates coordination and communications for major emergencies and disasters affecting the National Capital Region.

2. *How will it make a difference in the future?*

Through collaborative planning, communication, information sharing and coordination activities, regional officials have developed new policies, procedures and protocols that will allow them to assess emergencies, confer quickly and craft common messages for the public.

3. *How was the development of the RECPSM funded?*

The Washington Regional Association of Grant Makers (WRAG) awarded COG a \$75,000 grant to begin the planning process. Later, COG received a \$5 million appropriation from the federal government to address regional emergency preparedness, including communications, vulnerability threat assessment, regional training and community outreach.

4. *Who participated in crafting the RECPSM?*

Both public and private entities helped to develop the RECPSM, including the Office of Homeland Security; Executive Office of the President; Federal Emergency Management Agency; State of Maryland Emergency Management Agency; Virginia Department of Emergency Management; District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency; Greater Washington Board of Trade and the Potomac Conference; the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; water and wastewater, electric and other public utilities; schools and universities; medical institutions; community associations; and volunteer organizations.

5. *How does the RECPSM work?*

The RECPSM is based on the Federal Response Plan used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The RECPSM identifies 15 regional emergency support functional areas that may be needed during a regional emergency. These 15 Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs) allow for organizing information during a regional emergency into definable areas using common terminology.

The RECPSM will be implemented only by its participants and can be used in conjunction with other local, state, and federal plans. The RECPSM does not usurp or infringe on the authority of any participating jurisdiction or organization. Local, state, or federal officials will continue to make all necessary decisions affecting response, recovery, protective actions, and public health and safety advisories, etc., using their existing authority, policies, plans, and procedures.

6. What is the *Regional Incident Communications and Coordination System*SM (RICCS)?

The RICCSSM is a 24-hour, seven-day-a week communications capability that allows local, state and federal officials to share information within 30 minutes or less of an emergency. Participating organizations will use multiple means of communication, including conference calling, secure websites, and wireless communications systems.

7. How does the *RICCS*SM work?

When an incident takes place in a member jurisdiction, the local Emergency Communication Center (ECC) will assess the event to decide whether to request regional notification through the RICCSSM. The RICCSSM will reach key decision makers and representatives of the corresponding emergency support functions via telephone, cell phone, two-way radios, pages, e-mail, or other means as necessary.

8. What are the next steps?

The RECPSM is designed to be a flexible document that will be tested and updated regularly. In order to be effective, the Plan must be tested through real world operations and simulation exercises. Activities will include exercises and forums to ensure that key decision makers are kept up to date with changes to the RECPSM.

9. What does this Plan do for the general public?

The RECPSM helps local governments work together for a more coordinated response to regional emergencies. The first responders to any emergency always will be local police, firefighters, or other emergency personnel. This Plan addresses *regional* coordination for preparedness.

10. How can I obtain more information?

Copies of the full RECPSM and a summary document are available for downloading in PDF format on COG's website at www.mwcog.org/homeland_plan/index.htm. A CD-ROM version of the Plan may be obtained for \$15 from COG's Information Center at 202-962-3256 or mail to: infocntr@mwcog.org.