
UNIT 2. EOC: THE BASICS

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INTRODUCTION

Visual 2.1

**Unit 2:
Emergency
Operations Centers:
The Basics**



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Visual 2.1
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

INTRODUCTION

Visual 2.2

Unit 2 Objectives (1 of 2)

- Describe how the EOC is a critical link for each function of emergency management.
- Discuss the benefits of an effective EOC.
- Identify the importance of a strategic EOC and its relationship to the incident(s).



Key Points

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe how the EOC is a critical link for each of the emergency management mission areas.
- Discuss the benefits of an effective EOC.
- Identify the importance of a strategic EOC and its relationship to the incident(s).

INTRODUCTION

Visual 2.3

Unit 2 Objectives (2 of 2)

- **Identify the legal requirements, guidelines, and authorities that impact EOCs.**
- **Discuss the role of a Policy Group in an EOC.**
- **Discuss situational awareness and a common operating picture.**



The slide footer features the FEMA logo on the left, the text 'FEMA' in the center, and 'Visual 2.3 EOC Management and Operations (G0775)' on the right. The background of the footer is a red and blue gradient with a white star.

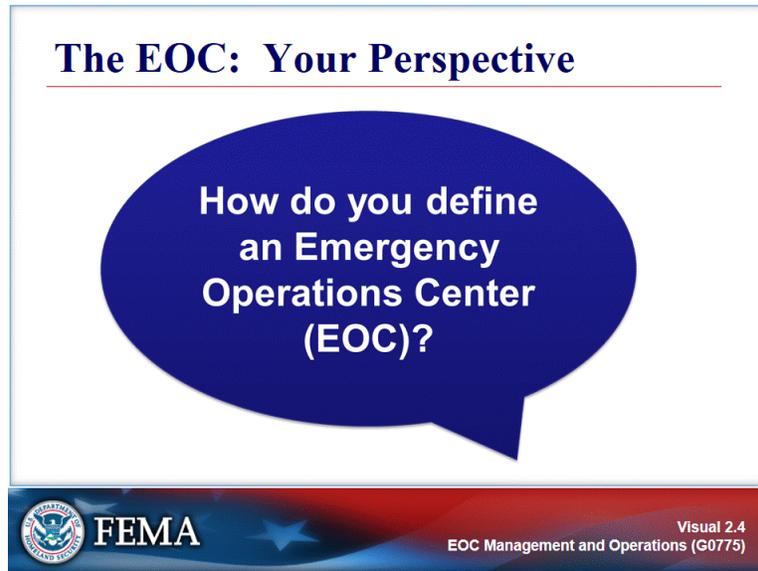
Key Points

Additional unit objectives include:

- Identify the legal requirements, guidelines, and authorities that impact EOCs.
- Discuss the role of a Policy Group in an EOC.
- Discuss situational awareness and a common operating picture.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EOC

Visual 2.4



Key Points

Discussion Question: How do you define an Emergency Operations Center (EOC)?

INTRODUCTION TO THE EOC

Visual 2.5

The EOC

A central location from which government – at any level – can provide interagency coordination and executive decisionmaking in support of incidents or disasters.



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Visual 2.5
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

The EOC carries out the coordination function through:

- Information collection, evaluation, and dissemination.
- Priority setting when appropriate.
- Resource management and documentation.
- The EOC may be the facility from which multiple incidents or events are coordinated.

Notice the word “coordination” in the definition. This course will explore why EOCs are more about coordination than command and control.

Next, notice the word “decisionmaking.” Decisions made at the EOC affect the incident response as well as the public response. The decisions made at the EOC are not tactical decisions, however. Tactical decisions are made by the Incident Commander and the Command Staff at the incident scene and this, too, will be examined throughout the course.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EOC

Visual 2.6

Emergency Coordination Center



In some communities, an EOC is called an Emergency Coordination Center (ECC).

Increasing numbers of jurisdictions use technology to conduct EOC operations “virtually”... with no central physical location.



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Visual 2.6
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

The EOC can sometimes be referred to as an Emergency Coordination Center (ECC).

Note that increasingly EOCs are being activated and operated virtually as technological advances make virtual EOC operations more possible.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EOC

Visual 2.7

Who Works in an EOC?



- Subject-matter experts (including traditional first responders) who work or live in the affected community and/or jurisdiction.
- Emergency management professionals who are the core staff and often assume leadership or coordination roles.

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Visual 2.7
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

- When activated for an incident, crisis, or disaster event, the EOC is staffed by a variety of subject-matter experts (including traditional first responders) who work or live in the affected community and/or jurisdiction.
- Operation of an EOC is traditionally a primary function of your community’s emergency management agency, department, or organization; therefore, emergency management professionals are the core staff present in an EOC and often assume leadership or coordination roles.

This course will detail who should (and sometimes should not) be in an EOC and how to select the right fit for certain EOC positions.

EOCs: A CRITICAL LINK

Visual 2.8

Discussion: A Critical Link



How do EOCs serve as a critical link during incidents, crises, or disasters?



Key Points

Discussion Question: How do EOCs serve as a critical link during incidents, crises, or disasters?

EOCs: A CRITICAL LINK

Visual 2.9

EOCs: A Critical Link

EOCs are a critical link for supporting emergency management functions before, during, and after an incident.



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Visual 2.9
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

EOCs are a critical link for supporting emergency management functions before, during, and after an incident.

EOCs: A CRITICAL LINK

Visual 2.10

Preparing for Incidents

Critical link:

- Activate
- Recall critical staff
- Review policies and procedures
- Prepare technology needs for EOC operations
- Offer guidance
- Inform the public

What are other examples?

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Visual 2.10
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

While we normally think of the EOC operating in terms of responding to an incident, it is actually a key player before, during, and after an incident.

When preparing for a foreseeable incident such as a hurricane, winter weather, and civil unrest, an EOC may activate or consider other actions such as:

- Recall of critical staff.
- Review policies and procedures in advance.
- Prepare technology needs for potential EOC operations.
- Inform the public about impending incidents.
- Offer strategic guidance to other entities and agencies.

Discussion Question: What are other examples of the EOC playing a critical role in preparing for incidents?

EOCs: A CRITICAL LINK

Visual 2.11

During Incident Response

Critical link:

- Support Incident Commanders
- Support other communities or jurisdictions
- Coordinate resources
- Develop situational awareness
- Inform the public

What are other examples?

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Visual 2.11
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

EOCs can play a critical role during an incident by:

- Supporting Incident Commanders.
- Supporting other communities or jurisdictions.
- Coordinating resources.
- Developing situational awareness.
- Informing the public.

A future unit will examine how communities and partners including first responders view the role of the EOC while it is responding to an incident.

Discussion Question: What are other examples of the EOC playing a critical role during incident response?

EOCs: A CRITICAL LINK

Visual 2.12

Throughout Recovery

Critical link:

- Transition a community from response to recovery (organizationally)
- Coordinate damages
- Create a narrative of the incident
- Seek State and/or Federal assistance
- Inform the public

What are other examples?

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Visual 2.12
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

EOCs can assist a community throughout recovery by:

- Transitioning a community from response to recovery (organizationally).
- Coordinating damages.
- Creating a narrative of the incident (building the community's case for State assistance).
- Seeking State and/or Federal assistance.
- Informing the public.

Discussion Question: What are other examples of the EOC playing a critical role throughout recovery?

EOCs: A CRITICAL LINK

Visual 2.13

Mitigating Future Damage

Critical link:

- Future mitigation plans can originate within an EOC environment.
- Critical mitigation staff are often present in an EOC during response.
- The EOC creates and maintains documentation for future or immediate mitigation opportunities.

What are other examples?

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Visual 2.13
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

Mitigation is often defined as the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters.

In mitigating future damages, the EOC also plays a role:

- Future mitigation plans can originate within an EOC environment.
- Critical mitigation staff are often present in an EOC during response.
- The EOC creates and maintains documentation for future or immediate mitigation opportunities.

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 mandates mitigation planning as a key element of emergency management for jurisdictions and that an EOC can be a key starting point for a community developing or enhancing its mitigation planning.

Documentation within an EOC during an incident highlights potential mitigation opportunities immediately after the incident has subsided and into the future.

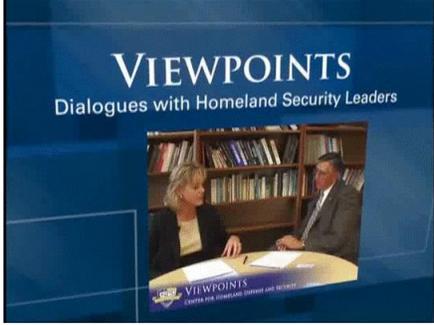
For more information on Mitigation, refer to FEMA’s mitigation programs including “on-the-spot” Public Assistance 406 Hazard Mitigation (PA406), Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program (PDM).

Discussion Question: What are other examples of the EOC playing a critical role in mitigating future damage?

EOCs: A CRITICAL LINK

Visual 2.14

The EOC and EM Functions: Viewpoints



Click image to play video.

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Visual 2.14
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

Let's hear Lori Hodges's thoughts on how the EOC plays a role in emergency management beyond responding to an incident. Lori is a Regional Field Manager with the State of Colorado's Division of Emergency Management. This is the first segment of an interview with Lori. We will hear from her again in this unit.

Video Transcript:

John Pennington: Hi, I'm John Pennington and this is Viewpoints and right now we're going to talk about the basics of an Emergency Operations Center within our course. Joining me for Viewpoints is Lori Hodges, who is with the State of Colorado's Division of Emergency Management and she is a Regional Field Manager. So first and foremost, thank you for letting me interview you for a brief moment or two about emergency operations center basics.

Lori Hodges: Well thank you for inviting me.

John: The public in general seems to believe that an Emergency Operations Center is really geared for response only and that that's when an Emergency Operations Center is activated and that's its sole purpose. What are your thoughts?

Lori: My thought is actually that, one of the core strengths of an Emergency Operations Center is the ability to transition from that immediate response where you are supporting what's going on with the Incident Commander, to the point where maybe that Incident Commander is no longer there, you no longer have that field component, but you still have a ton of things that are going on through recovery. So I see a couple of different transitions. One is you go from response, where recovery starts immediately. You need those people who are starting to think about that short-term recovery. You've evacuated everybody, now where are they gonna stay? How are you gonna get them back in the area? What is re-entry look like? You need people while they're doing response to think about that. And then you have a second transition where really you have to go from "everybody's in that Emergency Operations Center functioning and

EOCs: A CRITICAL LINK

Visual 2.14 (Continued)

coordinating” to “you need to move it to the departments that are now going to take this on long term.” Because as you know, recovery can kill a community. It’s gonna take months, years, maybe sometimes decades. So, at what point do we bring it back to that community and what does that transition look like? So I guess that’s what I’m getting at most is, you have several transitions that occur and the Emergency Operations Center is a great way to ensure the transition is smooth.

Lori: The recovery task force that we have, you know, that gets formed, a lot of what happens there is not only recovery but what is the mitigation look like post disaster, you know? You have a lot of the preparedness efforts that that whole collaborative piece of who are our partners, that all happens as well. So I think it’s all, it’s all one group together with that Emergency Operations Center.

EOC RELATIONSHIP TO ICP AND IMT

Visual 2.15

EOC Relationship to an ICP and IMT

<p>Incident Command Post (ICP)</p> <p>Field location of tactical-level, on-scene incident command and management.</p> 	<p>Incident Management Team (IMT)</p> <p>Cohesive unit of skilled/trained first responders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Supports a specific community.▪ Has a delegation of authority.
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An EOC is NOT an ICP or an IMT.

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Visual 2.15
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

Discussion Question: Who is familiar with Incident Command Posts and the concept of Incident Management Teams?

Definitions for ICP and IMT include:

- **Incident Command Post** is the field location of the tactical-level, on-scene incident command and management organization.
- **Incident Management Team** is a group of highly skilled and trained first responders that work as a cohesive unit during the response phase of an incident, often in support of a specific community or region and with a specific delegation of authority.

EOC RELATIONSHIP TO ICP AND IMT

Visual 2.16

EOC Relationship to Incident Command

- EOC supports the Incident Command by:
 - Providing resources.
 - Coordinating communications and advance warnings.
 - Establishing priorities among incidents.
- In a complex incident, IMT may help facilitate coordination.



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Visual 2.16
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

This visual presents a commonly understood interpretation of today's ICPs and IMTs. An EOC may interact with an ICP or an IMT in a variety of ways.

EOC supports the Incident Command by:

- Providing resources.
- Coordinating communications and advance warnings.
- Establishing priorities among incidents.

In a complex incident, IMT may help facilitate coordination.

Discussion Question: Does this visual present an accurate view of the existing relationship between EOCs and ICPs/IMTs? Why or why not?

BENEFITS OF AN EFFECTIVE EOC

Visual 2.17

The Benefits of an Effective EOC (1 of 2)

- **Allows a community to prepare for a foreseeable incident.**
- **Allows Incident Commanders and jurisdictions to focus on the needs of the incident.**
- **Promotes problem resolution at the lowest practical level.**
- **Helps establish situational awareness and a common operating picture.**
- **Coordinates long-term operations.**



Key Points

Benefits of an effective EOC include:

- Allowing a community to prepare for a foreseeable incident.
- Allowing Incident Commanders and jurisdictions to focus on the needs of the incident.
- Promoting problem resolution at the lowest practical level.
- Helping establish situational awareness and a common operating picture.
- Coordinating long-term operations.

This visual (and the next) highlight the importance of having an “effective” EOC. Simply designating a room or facility as an EOC does not guaranty effectiveness. Effective EOCs will allow communities to become more resilient over a period of time.

When incidents are predictable or foreseen (hurricane, potential tornadoes, winter weather, etc.), an activated EOC can allow for quicker and more structured coordination, alleviating the potential for confusion and lost time when response is eminent.

BENEFITS OF AN EFFECTIVE EOC

Visual 2.18

The Benefits of an Effective EOC (2 of 2)

- Consolidates resource identification, acquisition, and tracking.
- Sets response priorities.
- Provides legal and financial support.
- Liaisons with other jurisdictions and entities.
- Provides critical conduit between Incident Commanders.
- Provides timely, coordinated, and consolidated information.



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Visual 2.18
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

Additional benefits of an effective EOC include:

- Consolidates resource identification, acquisition, and tracking.
- Sets response priorities.
- Provides legal and financial support.
- Liaisons with other jurisdictions and entities.
- Provides critical conduit between Incident Commanders.
- Provides timely, coordinated, and consolidated information.

A lesser-recognized benefit of an effective EOC is that it can become a clearing house for the legal policies and authorities required to operate in an emergency situation. As EOCs and their respective emergency management organizations contend with issues over long periods of time, they often collect and document authorities, templates, and previous decisions and scenarios.

The final bullet (providing timely, coordinated, and consolidated information) has become one of the more critical functions of a well-established and effective EOC. This course has an entire unit dedicated to communication and public information as it relates to the EOC.

THE STRATEGIC EOC

Visual 2.19

The Strategic EOC

As risks and threats become more complex, EOCs must evolve to develop a more strategic, coordinated approach to manage incidents, crises, or disasters.



The Strategic EOC slide features three small images in a row. The first image shows a large fire with thick black smoke billowing into the sky. The second image shows a city skyline with several buildings emitting thick black smoke. The third image shows a hazardous material spill with a yellow and black 'DANGER HAZARDOUS MATERIAL' caution tape stretched across the scene.

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Visual 2.19
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

Although each community and each incident is different, a common goal of modern-day emergency management is to strive for EOCs that are strategic in nature and more focused on coordination.

The most effective EOCs are those that have become “coordination centric” and are strategically focused—as opposed to hands-on, in-the-field, and tactical.

THE STRATEGIC EOC

Visual 2.20

Strategic vs. Tactical EOC

Strategic EOC:
Determines and coordinates “what” is to be done during an incident(s).

Tactical EOC:
Conducts on-scene operations itself or in conjunction with first responders.

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Visual 2.20
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

The difference between a strategic and tactical EOC is that the strategic EOC determines and coordinates “what” is to be done during an incident(s), whereas a tactical EOC attempts to conduct actual on-scene or field operations itself or in conjunction with first responders.

Discussion Question: Do you agree with these descriptions? Why or why not?

Discussion Question: Can you envision a scenario where an EOC actually could become tactical?

THE STRATEGIC EOC

Visual 2.21

The Strategic EOC: Viewpoints



VIEWPOINTS
CENTER FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND SECURITY

Click image to play video.

?

Why have some EOCs had a difficult time keeping a strategic focus?



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Visual 2.21
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

In this video, Lori Hodges shares her thoughts on strategic EOCs.

Video Transcript:

John: The purpose of this class is to really talk to the students a little bit about the history of Emergency Operations Centers, where they've been, and where they're going in the 21st century, and you have tremendous expertise in this and, I think, a great viewpoint. So let's talk a little bit about strategic and tactical Emergency Operations Centers. There's been a lot of debate, I think a lot of evolution of Emergency Operations Centers, and, in this course, really tries to emphasize the role of an EOC as being strategic in nature, more coordinative, more coordinating as opposed to tactical. Any thoughts on that?

Lori: Yeah, I would agree. In the past we've seen a lot of difficulty with emergency operations centers when they first started, because you did have a lot of the operational folks within that Emergency Operations Center and they're typically used to being in the field and solving the problem. So when they come into that Emergency Operation Center environment, which is more of that coordination, more of that support, they have a difficult time of sitting in that seat and making sure that they're looking at "How do I support the decisions that are already being made instead of actually making that decision?" We also see that from a policy level with elected officials who, they have a key role in an Emergency Operations Center as a policy group, but a lot of times we see them, too, trying to solve that problem instead of seeing what needs to happen, what that Incident Commander is saying they want, and how do we now support that through policy or through decisionmaking.

THE STRATEGIC EOC

Visual 2.22

Discussion: Strategic Approach

Instructions: Review the resource needs below.

Incident 1 Needs: Fire Apparatus EMS Helicopter Shelter	Incident 2 Needs: Helicopter S.A.R. Reverse Notification Shelter	Incident 3 Needs: Fire Apparatus Law Enforcement Reverse Notification Shelter
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Discussion Question: How would using a strategic approach help determine how to meet the needs of all three incidents?



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Visual 2.22
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

Incident 1 Needs: Fire Apparatus, EMS, Helicopter, Shelter

Incident 2 Needs: Helicopter, S.A.R., Reverse Notification, Shelter

Incident 3 Needs: Fire Apparatus, Law Enforcement, Reverse Notification, Shelter

Discussion Question: How would using a strategic approach help determine how to meet the needs of all three incidents?

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND AUTHORITIES

Visual 2.23

Legal Requirements and Authorities

Typically, jurisdictional EOCs derive their authorities through a combination of statutes.

How do different levels of authority affect your EOC?

County State Tribal City

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Visual 2.23
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

The authorities and guidelines that govern emergency management and, therein, EOCs are often intertwined and interact with each other to create a system of emergency management governance. EOCs are often a direct function of emergency management.

The State of Washington, as an example, has a statute that outlines the minimal emergency management capabilities an organization must have to be established and operate as “emergency management.” Any county organization, below that State level, can develop an emergency management department or agency but must place that “enabling” language into local county code or statute, referencing the State governing statutes. A city may contract with a county (or act on its own) to develop an emergency management program, but the same enabling statutes must exist.

EOCs must recognize and fully understand their authorities.

Discussion Question: How do different levels of authority affect your EOC?

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND AUTHORITIES

Visual 2.24

Guidance and Doctrine

- **National Preparedness Goal (NPG)**
- **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**
- **National Frameworks for Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery**
- **Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)**

Visual 2.24
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

Guidance and Doctrine

- National Preparedness Goal. The National Preparedness Goal is the cornerstone for the implementation of Presidential Policy Directive 8, or PPD-8 which describes the Nation’s approach to national preparedness. The goal identifies the Nation’s core capabilities required for achieving the five mission areas of Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. The NPG offers an overarching preparedness framework for jurisdictions to develop and enhance an EOC. <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/prepared/npg.pdf>
- National Incident Management System. System that provides a proactive approach guiding government agencies at all levels, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work seamlessly to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, in order to reduce the loss of life or property and harm to the environment. <http://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>
- National Planning Frameworks for the five mission areas. The frameworks are succinct, high-level descriptions, for each of the five mission areas, of the coordinating structures necessary to (1) deliver the core capabilities from that mission area, and (2) support the delivery of core capabilities from the other mission areas. <http://www.fema.gov/ppd8>
- Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP). Although there are several guiding documents that assist with COOP development, COOP planning is a mandatory Federal requirement that States have increasingly adopted. Local jurisdictions of all sizes should strive to achieve a degree of COOP compliance where possible. This course will touch on redundancy and COOP and its importance to EOCs. <http://www.fema.gov/continuity-operations>

THE POLICY GROUP AND THE EOC

Visual 2.25

EOC Authority & Policy Group



- Local statutes or delegations of authority may limit an EOC's functions or actions.
 - Example: Monetary spending thresholds
- A Policy Group may:
 - Authorize additional fiscal resources.
 - Provide operational guidance.

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Visual 2.25
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

In some communities and jurisdictions, local statutes or delegations of authority may limit an EOC's functions or actions. These limitations may include monetary thresholds.

It is often the role of a Policy Group to authorize additional fiscal resources and/or to provide operational guidance for an EOC during activation.

THE POLICY GROUP AND THE EOC

Visual 2.26

The Policy Group and the EOC

The Policy Group makes strategic decisions by:

- Issuing an Initial Policy Statement to guide the EOC.
- Determining EOC and Policy Group reporting requirements.
- Determining Policy Group decisionmaking process.
- Identifying fiscal issues and possible parameters for the EOC.
- Determining who needs to be included in the Policy Group.



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Visual 2.26
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

Actions a Policy Group may undertake when it is activated with an EOC:

- Issue an Initial Policy Statement to guide the EOC: This is a formal document that helps the EOC to “frame” response activities. If a Policy Group is not activated or engaged, the EOC must act according to its own authorities and policies. However, when a Policy Group does stand up, the EOC should expect an initial statement that helps to guide response.
- Determine EOC and Policy Group reporting requirements: A primary function of an effective and well-established Policy Group is a statement that sets parameters for the EOC to report to the Policy Group. This is a form of defining roles and responsibilities between the EOC and the Policy Group.
- Determine Policy Group decisionmaking process: The EOC may have to resolve potential conflicts within the Policy Group on issues including how best to make decisions. When multiple jurisdictions are involved in a Policy Group, the conflict can escalate and the EOC manager may be called upon to make recommendations on how best to proceed.
- Identify fiscal issues and possible parameters for the EOC: The Policy Group will rely upon the EOC to determine potential short- and long-term costs of operations, as well as seek estimates on damage assessments as incidents grow.
- Determine who comprises the Policy Group: The composition of the Policy Group is important and the EOC should have recommendations as to who is or is not in the Policy Group.

THE POLICY GROUP AND THE EOC

Visual 2.27

The Policy Group

A Policy Group:

- May stand alone or be a breakout function of an EOC.
- Is often comprised of:
 - Elected officials.
 - Senior decisionmakers.
 - Senior public safety officials.
 - High-level, subject-matter experts.
 - Additional personnel as required by the Policy Group.



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Visual 2.27
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

A Policy Group may:

- Be a standalone or “breakout” Policy Group, located adjacent to EOC operations (example: breakout room next to the EOC operations floor).
- Be located in an area away from the physical location of the EOC (example: city or county administration building). Policy Groups may also operate “virtually,” via phone conferences, video, radio, or email.

Policy Groups are most often comprised of experienced or authorized individuals, including but not limited to:

- Elected officials (examples: City Council Chair or the Mayor).
- Senior decisionmakers (examples: Jurisdictional Manager or Administrator).
- Senior public safety officials (examples: Fire or Police Chiefs or designees, Public Works Directors, etc.).
- High-level, subject-matter experts (examples: hazardous material chiefs, weather leads, seismic experts).
- Additional personnel as required by the Policy Group.

THE POLICY GROUP AND THE EOC

Visual 2.28

Discussion: In Your Opinion ...

Why is it important (when possible) to request that a Fire or Police Chief remain part of the Policy Group instead of assuming a staff role within the EOC?

The slide features a blue speech bubble containing the discussion question. At the bottom left is the FEMA logo with the text 'FEMA'. At the bottom right, it says 'Visual 2.28 EOC Management and Operations (G0775)'. The background of the slide has a red and blue gradient with a star.

Key Points

A Policy Group should re-consider its membership on a daily basis, asking who should or should **not** be included in the meetings. EOC managers should offer recommendations to the Policy Group leader as to who should be included in a Policy Group and who should not.

Discussion Question: Why is it important (when possible) to request that a Fire or Police Chief remain part of the Policy Group instead of assuming a staff role within the EOC?

THE POLICY GROUP AND THE EOC

Visual 2.29

Policy Group Statement

- Guides the EOC
- Frames response
- Provides priorities
- Establishes protocols
- Establishes reporting



Initial Policy Group Statement 2.1



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Visual 2.29
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Snohomish County (W)
Snohomish County Dept of Emergency Management
725 1st Street SW
Everett, WA 98203

Unified Policy Group: Initial Policy Statement

September 19th, 2011

From Snohomish County Unified Policy Group
To: John E. Thompson, EOC Director (Snohomish County)

A policy framework with respect to the catastrophic event caused by the 7.4 earthquake operating much of Snohomish County, centered in the area of Mill Creek and affecting the surrounding region.

Our priorities and objectives are as follows:

To safeguard the:

- Life
- Property
- Environment, and the
- Economy of Snohomish County residents, its visitors and others affected by the quake.

The Protocols and Requirements between the EOC and Policy are as follows:

- EOC briefing to the Policy Group every 30 minutes until further notice @ 10:00 AM, or later.
- Priority 6:00EJ communication between EOC and Policy will be with extension 2006

Snohomish County Unified Policy Group and the EOC are also committed to effectively communicating with the public during this emergency.

For more information, please contact Policy Chair, Dave Somers at 2843.

Executive Advisor O. Reardon Cooman Dave Somers Mayor Ray
Snohomish Snohomish County District 5 City of Everett

Key Points

This visual presents an example of an Initial Policy Group Statement for an EOC. Note that this is not a press release. The statement is a guiding document intended solely for the EOC – not for first responders in the field. The Policy Group is telling the EOC that these are the priorities of the incident as it currently exists. In turn, the EOC is prioritizing and coordinating where applicable for those incident(s) outside of the EOC.

This sample Policy Group Statement can be used as a template for many EOCs and offers the lesser known benefit of becoming an official means of “documenting” decisionmaking. A larger version of this document is provided in the appendix for this unit.

INTRODUCTION TO SITUATIONAL AWARENESS/COMMON OPERATING PICTURE

Visual 2.30

Information

One of the key EOC responsibilities is the coordination, processing, and dissemination of information.



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Visual 2.30
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

One of the key responsibilities of an EOC is the coordination, processing, and dissemination of information. This section of the unit covers the basic concepts of situational awareness (SA) and the development of a common operating picture (COP). As the course progresses, you will constantly be considering the issues of SA and COP.

The next few visuals are an **introduction** to SA and COP. An entire unit and exercise is dedicated to SA and COP later in this course.

INTRODUCTION TO SITUATIONAL AWARENESS/COMMON OPERATING PICTURE

Visual 2.31

Introduction: Situational Awareness

“The ability to identify, process, and comprehend the critical information about an incident. More simply, it is knowing what is going on around you. Situational Awareness requires continuous monitoring of relevant sources of information regarding actual incidents and developing hazards.”

- National Response Framework (NRF)



Key Points

There are many different viewpoints of SA and COP. This definition is from The National Response Framework.

“The ability to identify, process, and comprehend the critical information about an incident. More simply, it is knowing what is going on around you. Situational Awareness requires continuous monitoring of relevant sources of information regarding actual incidents and developing hazards.”

INTRODUCTION TO SITUATIONAL AWARENESS/COMMON OPERATING PICTURE

Visual 2.32

Introduction: Common Operating Picture

A common operating picture:

- Means that personnel from all organizations at all locations have the same information.
- Is based on situational awareness of:
 - Current status and evolving situation.
 - Needed resources.
 - Availability and location of resources.



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Visual 2.32
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

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- Means that personnel from all organizations at all locations have the same information.
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INTRODUCTION TO SITUATIONAL AWARENESS/COMMON OPERATING PICTURE

Visual 2.33



Key Points

In this segment, Lori Hodges talks about situational awareness and common operating picture.

Video Transcript:

John: And then, I think the last question I wanted to ask you is about situational awareness and a common operating picture. You're at the State-level, and you're naturally dealing with what I assume would be county jurisdictions and local jurisdictions, feeding information up to you and then perhaps down. Can you talk about the role of an Emergency Operations Center today and development of situational awareness and the ultimate development of a common operations picture?

Lori: Yeah, what I've seen most, I work in a lot of local Emergency Operations Centers as it's part of my job, I'm the direct connection to the State so I go to where they are, and what I've seen with communities that don't have an Emergency Operations Center is that there is no hub of information, there's no one place where people can get that full picture, again, of the whole community. So if I have the nongovernmental entities, the private sector, the traditional governmental departments, if they don't have a place to go to share information, you're gonna have a lot of stovepipes going on, you're not gonna have a good one-stop situational awareness. So, what the Emergency Operations Center can do is, number one, they're gonna get a good idea about that incident footprint. What is the Incident Commander doing, what are their objectives, what do they need? Because obviously that's one of the primary focuses of an Emergency Operations Center. But outside of that, you have that consequence management piece, which is now, we're looking at globally what is going on in the community. How are they reacting? Are we meeting the needs of the community as a whole? And with that, you have multiple partners that aren't in your traditional response. So, in order to get good situational awareness, you need to have those people who can come to a place and say "here's what's going on in our organization, here's how we're supporting this incident." And then you can feed that information then up to those policy group members so that they have a better idea and can inform the public about what's going on.

INTRODUCTION TO SITUATIONAL AWARENESS/COMMON OPERATING PICTURE

Visual 2.33 (Continued)

John: It's a network of information.

Lori: It is. Exactly.

John: Great. Well thank you so much for being with me today to talk about the EOC basics. It's not as simple, perhaps, as we think it is. This is Lori Hodges from the State of Colorado, and this has been Viewpoints.

SUMMARY

Visual 2.34

Unit 2 Summary

We discussed:

- **How the EOC is a critical link for each function of emergency management.**
- **Benefits of an effective EOC.**
- **Differences between strategic and tactical EOCs.**
- **Legal requirements, guidelines, and authorities that impact EOCs.**
- **Policy Groups.**
- **Situational awareness/common operating picture.**



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Visual 2.34
EOC Management and Operations (G0775)

Key Points

This unit covered the basic concepts behind the EOC.

- How the EOC is a critical link for each function of emergency management.
- The benefits of an effective EOC.
- The difference between strategic and tactical EOCs.
- The legal requirements, guidelines, and authorities that impact EOCs.
- The role of a Policy Group.
- Situational awareness and common operating picture (More detail on these concepts appear later in the course).

Unit 3 examines EOC organizational structures and the challenges of staffing an EOC.