UNIT 7: PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL ACTIONS

Student Manual

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Emergency Management Institute
PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL ACTIONS INTRODUCTION

Now that you have an understanding of what the Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services are, what is required to provide them, and who in your community can help provide them, we will now look at some additional planning and operational actions and then put your knowledge of Mass Care and Emergency Assistance to work.
OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the impact planning and operational actions will have on providing Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services in your community.
- Name the planning and operational actions.
PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL ACTIONS

The topics listed on the visual are areas that you must consider when providing Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services. You cannot provide these services effectively or efficiently without addressing these issues. For instance, without establishing leadership, you cannot manage these services and you have no direction.

We will now discuss each of these individually.
Physical and Mental Health

Healthcare issues will arise in all shelters and the facilities you operate must provide access to adequate healthcare services in the community. The shelter must protect the health of residents, prevent disease, and provide first aid as needed.

Physical Health Support

Health-related needs can include:
- Medical intervention and treatment
- First aid
- Prescription storage and/or replacement
- Medical devices and aids

How do you address the healthcare issues in your shelters?
- Identify staff that have first aid training.
- Identify shelter residents that have first aid training or other medical backgrounds.
- Coordinate with EMS in your community or with higher levels of government.
- Transfer people that have serious injuries or are very sick to the closest available hospital.
- Are public health nurses available to help prevent the spread of communicable disease?
- Who does the Health and Sanitation Inspections of the shelters?
- Think about utilizing local nursing homes or other long-term care facilities and staff as part of your plan if they have resources available.
- If you need mental health resources, where do they come from? (suggestions: community counseling resources, ecumenical or pastoral resources, and volunteer licensed therapists)
- Maintain records on all health incidents and related actions taken.

Mental Health Support

Disasters are upsetting experiences for everyone involved. Children may become afraid and some elderly people may seem disoriented at first.
Some typical mental health support services include:

- Advocacy
- Casualty support
- Consultation
- Crisis intervention
- Emotional care and support
- Environmental stress management
- Referrals for continued care

The potential for drug and alcohol abuse increases in disasters. Mental health support for shelter residents is very important in helping people deal with their losses and begin the recovery process. It will also help people manage feelings of post-traumatic stress. These resources include:

- Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that provide crisis counseling.
- Congregations and faith-based organizations often provide counseling services.
- Volunteers from the community who are trained as licensed therapists.

It is critical to provide mental health support for your local disaster workers. Remember – they may be impacted by the disaster, too.

For physical and mental health support, you should collaborate with local government, healthcare providers, local pharmacies, and local public health departments to plan for the physical and mental health support needed in your community when a disaster strikes.

**Children in Disasters**

Amid the chaos of disaster, either a natural or manmade event, there is an increased possibility for children to become separated from their parents or legal guardians. This is especially true during a no-notice event. This separation could occur during the evacuation or sheltering process, or because children are temporarily located at a child care, educational, medical, juvenile justice, recreational, or other facility.
Reunifying unaccompanied minors with their parents or legal guardians in the aftermath of a disaster should be a priority. It is critical to have an understanding of the agency or organization within your local jurisdiction responsible for the temporary care of unaccompanied minors and overseeing reunification efforts, as roles often vary amongst jurisdictions and States. Reunification efforts may require the coordinated use of resources from across the whole community at the local, State, regional, and national levels. Leading and supporting agencies and organizations should have clearly identified roles and responsibilities, and should consider outlining processes and procedures for addressing:

- Safety of unaccompanied minors
- Length of stay in shelters
- Transition to social service systems
- Child custody requirements
- Medical consent requirements

The recently developed *Post-Disaster Reunification of Children: A Nationwide Approach* reflects our Nation’s first attempt to establish such a foundation, and can be easily applied to either existing emergency preparedness plans or those under development.

When the demands of a disaster exceed the capacity of local or State governments, assistance may be offered to enhance and supplement reunification efforts. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA) of 2006 identified the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) as the leading national organization responsible for facilitating the expeditious reunification of children during disasters. NCMEC can offer technical assistance to emergency management, law enforcement agencies, disaster relief organizations, and other stakeholders, to help alleviate the burden on these agencies to field, assess, and investigate the multitude of inquiries that would inevitably take up large amounts of time, energy, and resources that a local jurisdiction or State may not have readily available to reunify families in the midst of a disaster. Such resources are available at no-cost share during a Presidentially declared disaster.

NCMEC has also established an Unaccompanied Minors Registry (UMR) which is a free, online data collection tool—the first of its kind—that provides a central repository to share, store, and retrieve information on children separated as a result of a disaster. The UMR’s national portal is always available to reunification experts from fields such as emergency management, social services, law enforcement, disaster relief agencies, the faith-based community, and individuals in healthcare, childcare, and education, as well as the general public [http://www.ncmec.org/DisasterResponse](http://www.ncmec.org/DisasterResponse).
Any other sheltering issues specific to this population identified in emergency preparedness plans.

For unaccompanied minor issues, jurisdictions should contact their State agency for child welfare and must contact law enforcement.
Donations and Volunteer Management

Donations and volunteers will come into a disaster area immediately after an event. It is imperative that efforts are made to coordinate these efforts early.

Managing donations and volunteers is important for several reasons. You may encounter unsolicited, undesignated in-kind donations. The efficient management of donations and volunteers helps to ensure that the right resources address the operational requirements. Good resource management can help: prevent services from being duplicated; keep track of donations and volunteers; support the process for the acknowledgment donors and volunteers; and prepare and plan for the next disaster.

Planning support for donations and volunteer management may also be available through State VOAD or next level of emergency management. As your community prepares to manage donations and volunteers, contact your next level of emergency management for more information.

Your community will need to plan for how to manage donations to individuals, agencies, or organizations involved in donations management. Some suggestions to help manage donations and volunteers include:

- Educate the public.
- Identify needs.
- Receive donation offers and unsolicited goods and volunteers.
- Manage information and messaging.
- Negotiate with donors. Planned donations are those that are requested in advance of the event as part of your planning process and the items are known.
- Manage logistics.
- Provide assistance to survivors.
- Provide volunteer and donations acknowledgements.

It is important that donations and volunteers, as well as requests for resources, are tracked. This process may be as simple as using handwritten lists, or as sophisticated as dedicated information systems used by emergency management. No matter what process is used, it needs to be compatible with the systems in place at the next higher level of government.

Documentation of volunteer hours may have a direct impact on a jurisdiction’s cost share or reimbursement of expenses in a federally declared disaster. The cost share is one quarter of the agreed-upon expenses for predetermined services. Volunteer hours can be used to offset this cost share.
In order to do this, you must capture this information at the time of the event in your community. Donated resources must be documented by a local public official or his/her designee. The documentation needs to include a record of volunteer hours worked, the work location, a description of the work by each volunteer, as well as equivalent information for equipment and materials that were donated. Guidance on these submissions should be obtained from the next higher level of government office that is handling Federal Public Assistance claims. Some examples of these are:

- Providing support staff for MC/EA services such as: staffing shelters, feeding survivors and emergency workers, distributing emergency supplies, and assisting in reunification activities.
- Providing of Personal Assistance Services (PAS).
- Support for household pets and service animals.

**Public Information**

It is important to establish who you will collaborate with when developing and disseminating public information. The information should include where the public can locate and support the Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services, such as shelter locations, feeding locations, evacuation efforts, etc.

Use the class-selected scenario for the following questions. Allow participants time to consider the questions and answer them before moving on.

Utilize cultural media outlets such as non-English-speaking radio and TV stations. Coordinate messaging with the whole community and media.

**Established media – radio, TV, newspapers**

- Will these work if the power is out?
- Will the media outlets broadcast the information for you?

**Electronic messaging – telephones, social media sites, text messaging, e-mails, reverse 911, weather alert radios**

- Will these work if the power is out?
- What if cell towers are down or the system is overwhelmed?
- What if telephone lines are down?
- What if Internet service is not available?
Low-tech methods – face-to-face, route alerting (loudspeakers on vehicles), fixed sirens, and loudspeakers

- How long will it take to distribute the information?
- What are the fastest and most effective locations or methods to distribute the information?

You should collaborate with other agencies/emergency management local media providers and Public Information Officers to develop a public messaging plan. For privacy reasons, this should include guidelines pertaining to the press/media in shelters.

**Individual and Family Preparedness**

Individuals and families that are prepared for disasters are safer and more resilient. In turn, this makes the community more resilient and may lessen the community’s requirement to deliver Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services to its residents.

Remember that disasters begin and end locally and this includes individual households in the community. For instance, if families have emergency kits that allow them to stay in their homes and feed themselves, the need for shelter and feeding by the community is reduced.

You should also inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school, faith organizations, sports events, and commuting. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Discuss with your colleagues, neighbors, and members of faith or civic organizations how everyone can work together in the event of an emergency.

You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you plan ahead and communicate with others in advance. All these steps build community resilience. The goal is to affect change at the community level by starting with the individual.

For example, those monitoring Super Storm Sandy in 2012 had a week’s notice of possible landfall. This gave them time to fuel up their cars and to purchase food, hydration items, and portable generators. If they didn’t need to evacuate, they were able to shelter-in-place. When the power went out, they were able to have light and operate appliances. When the gas stations couldn’t pump gas, they were able to drive their vehicles.

All of these preparedness activities led to more individual and family resiliency and contributed to a reduction in the MC/EA services needed by survivors.
Community Disaster Education

- Does your community have a program to educate the citizens on where to find information during a disaster?
- Are there emergency preparedness programs in the local school system?
- Does the business community have emergency plans in place for their employees?

Many organizations and agencies have individual and family preparedness programs. Please refer to the Resource section in the Appendix for links to some of these, including the following: http://www.ready.gov and http://www.redcross.org/prepare. Both of these sites contain sample individual and family plans, preparedness activities, and tools and resources.


Financial

Now that we’ve discussed the Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services, you may be asking how all this will be funded. The items listed are possible sources only. Each must be considered on a case-by-case basis and each should be explored in advance and in collaboration with the next higher level of government or the provider.

- Monetary support from private sector (i.e., a local company releases staff to work in the shelter and pays for the meals or provides a direct financial donation.)
- Local government budgets
- Community fundraising activities
- Government Grants (planning and operations) – contact your State Office of Emergency Management
- Foundation Grants – preparedness activities and direct financial donations
- Reimbursement – may be available for certain Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services. It is critical to work with county or State emergency management to utilize the processes for reimbursement.
MOAs, MOUs, and Mutual Aid

Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs), Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and Mutual Aid are documents describing a bilateral or multilateral agreement between parties. They express a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action. They are often used in cases where parties either do not imply a legal commitment or in situations where the parties cannot create a legally enforceable agreement. However, legal counsel is still strongly advised.

These documents are important in the planning phase in order to determine who will and/or where Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services will be provided. The agreements can be set up with any individual, business, or any other governmental, private sector, or faith-based organization.

By having these agreements in place before a disaster occurs, your community will be able to provide Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services and all parties involved will have accountability to provide the necessary aid. Keep in mind that although Mutual Aid Agreements may be in place with neighboring jurisdictions, those communities may also be overwhelmed and unable to assist. Also, MOUs need to be set up ahead of time for FEMA reimbursement if it comes to that.
1. List the parties and their addresses.

2. Purpose.
   This paragraph defines, in as few words as possible, the purpose of the document and outlines the terms of the agreement or understanding.

3. Reference.
   This paragraph will list the references that are directly related to the document. For instance, the mission statements of each party involved or related laws.

4. Problem.
   Present a clear, concise statement of the problem, to include a brief background.

5. Scope.
   Add a succinct statement specifying the scope of the document.

6. Understandings, agreements, support and resource needs.
   List the understandings, agreements, support and resource needs, and responsibilities of and between each of the parties or agencies involved in the agreement.

7. Specify monetary and performance terms.
   Explain payment rates with all rates agreed to by both parties. Designate specific timeframes and dollar amounts to be paid upon completion of each identifiable task.

8. Include a monitoring component to determine agreement compliance.
   If the terms of the agreement are not being fulfilled, allow for a termination clause.

9. Effective date.
   Enter the date the agreement will become effective.

10. Signatures of the parties involved.
LIABILITY

Liability

A legal responsibility, especially for one’s act or omissions.

- Three types of liability issues:
  - Civil liability
  - Licensing and credentials
  - Injury or death

Liability Issues

There is always the possibility of liability issues when providing Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services. It is important that you are aware of any State laws, statutes, or any other legality that could arise when providing Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services.

Liability is a legal responsibility, especially for one’s acts or omissions. Liability can arise from negligent or intentional acts or omissions that cause harm (civil or tort liability); breach of the terms of a contract; or violate statutory or regulatory requirements.

Any type of activity in which carelessness can cause injury or property damage is a potential source of liability for negligence. Motor vehicle operation, care of injured victims at the scene of an emergency, volunteer training and exercises, and volunteer screening and credentialing are activities that can cause legal concerns. And injury or damage does not result in a civil liability unless there is a legal basis for holding someone responsible for that loss.

The FEMA Citizen Corps Volunteer Liability Guide offers some good information about liability issues.

http://www.ready.gov/guides
Training Standards:
- Keep yourself and your staff up-to-date on training and best practices. This is the standard you will be held to in litigation.
- CERT and non-profit and voluntary organizations, faith- and community-based groups, and the private sector (business and industry), have a lot of training that is available for a number of tasks and responsibilities.
- Track all training provided.

Damages
- Some damages could occur during the course of providing Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services. You should make sure in any agreement that you address who will take care of damages.
- Your community should be prepared to address any reparations if they are necessary.
As liability and protection varies based on affiliation, whether the volunteer is registered with a governmental entity, and other factors, it is important to understand that there are several categories of volunteers who may be involved in response to a disaster.

- **Community volunteers**
  - Individuals who agree to perform unpaid work for a school, faith-based institution, community-based social service, humanitarian organization, or emergency services organization.

- **Good Samaritans**
  - Someone who, usually without obligation or compensation, provides assistance to a survivor at the scene of an accident or sudden emergency where there is no easy access to professional care of assistance.

- **Government-sponsored and managed emergency volunteers**
  - Emergency management increasingly utilizes organized and trained groups of volunteers that supplement professional emergency responders.
• Voluntary organizations and emergency volunteers managed by non-governmental organizations
  - Many non-governmental organizations (businesses and non-profit) have historically been very active in responding to disasters. While some paid staff may be deployed to a disaster, they rely on thousands of their volunteers to assist.

• Spontaneous volunteers
  - Individuals who come to the scene of a disaster to offer help, but are not affiliated with any emergency response agency in advance.

Depending on affiliation, compensation, and other factors, out-of-State volunteers may be protected from liability by a variety of sources:

• Governmental or sovereign immunity
  - A doctrine derived from English common law that says no governmental body can be sued without its consent. In addition to Federal employees, volunteers who are “deemed” to be Federal employees, State employees (depending on State statutes), and volunteers “deemed” to be State employees, are generally covered by the governmental immunity.
  - Such immunity is not absolute. The Federal government and States’ legislatures have created waivers to sovereign immunity for certain categories of lawsuits. The Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) of 1946 provides a limited waiver, primarily when government employees are negligent.

• Good Samaritan statutes
  - Almost all States have Good Samaritan laws which provide protection to those who stop and provide care in emergencies and are not compensated for the care they provide, but coverage/criteria vary widely by State.
  - There must be an emergency situation, but a formal declaration is not necessary. These laws may, but do not typically, include out-of-State licensed healthcare professionals. Some States, though, include even non-licensed Good Samaritans.
  - It should be noted that while most statutes provide limited immunity for ordinary negligence (not gross negligence), they do not provide indemnity; court costs are not covered if a volunteer is sued.
• Volunteer protection acts
  – Responding to State legislative efforts of the 1980s and 1990s, Congress passed the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 to “establish one uniform national law that would shield volunteers from personal liability in situations where they could not be deemed employees of a governmental body.” One of the major concerns motivating Congress was that fear of liability would deter people from volunteering for charitable activities. In additional, government entities also wanted to extend liability protection to volunteers even if their jurisdiction lacked an adequate deemer law.
  – Simply stated, the Federal Volunteer Protection Act provides immunity for volunteers serving non-profit organization or governmental entities for harm caused by their acts or omissions if:
    ▪ The volunteer was acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities.
    ▪ If appropriate or required, the volunteer was properly licensed, certified, or authorized to act.
    ▪ The harm was not caused by willful, criminal, or reckless misconduct or gross negligence.
    ▪ The harm was not caused by the volunteer operating a motor vehicle, vessel, or aircraft.
  – The Federal VPA protects individual volunteers who are working without compensation and within their area of responsibility for a governmental entity or non-profit organization. It does not protect:
    ▪ Volunteers or businesses, which include many hospitals.
    ▪ Organizations of any type, including non-profit or governmental organizations that use volunteers, or the organization’s paid employees, who may train or supervise volunteers.
  – Some States have enacted their own Volunteer Protection Acts, but they differ widely and some are too specific.
LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

Leadership
Process of influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.

Coordination
Webster – “To work together harmoniously”

In order to provide the most efficient Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services to a community, you must have the people who can pull everything together harmoniously. Leadership has been described as the “process of influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.” By having proper leadership, Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services can be provided most efficiently. To prepare your community for a disaster, you should:

1. Select members for a leadership team.
2. Assess the situation to determine Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services, requirements, and providers needed.
3. Coordinate activities to ensure the welfare and safety of the community is planned for and not left to chance.
4. Ensure that those providing Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services know their duties and responsibilities.
5. Ensure that everyone has the most up-to-date information available about the disaster response.
6. Determine efficient and optimal use of resources.

There are many kinds of disasters, each having different magnitudes and differing impacts on the lives of the survivors. When they happen, neighbors and community organizations want to reach out and help, but it is not always easy.
Providing leadership during a disaster will call upon people’s skills and abilities to cope with stress and work under extreme pressure. The abilities to calm people, motivate them, and care for them during disasters are important characteristics of effective leaders during a response. Identifying and selecting people in your community with these abilities may arguably be more important than the specifics of your disaster plan.

Community organizations can be active in disaster and can help a community make the best use of its resources in a disaster. These organizations are effective because local resource providers are in the best position to mobilize and bring practical and timely assistance to disaster survivors.

Community organizations consist of voluntary organizations, government agencies, private sector, and faith-based groups who serve.

Through collaboration, cooperation, communication, and coordination of goods and services, time, energy, and funds are better utilized and the survivors of disasters are better served. When disasters take place, an organized community structure makes support and delivery of Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services more effective and efficient.

Some communities have decided to organize in a more formal manner and have formed Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD). To learn more, go to www.ready.gov.
CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Closing Activities

- Sheltering
- Feeding
- Distribution of Emergency Supplies
- Reunification

Closing Activities

Remember, disasters begin and end locally. As important as it is to provide an efficient response, providing an effective recovery is just as critical to community resilience. As part of that process, planning for discontinuing MC/EA at the appropriate time will ensure a smoother transition into recovery for the community.
Sheltering

In an earlier unit, we discussed opening and maintaining a sheltering operation. At the same time a shelter is opened, you need to begin planning its closure.

The following are some questions to consider:

- Are there other housing options available for those affected?
- Is a transitional or short-term housing program available?
- What is the facility’s ongoing availability? For instance, does the school need to reopen?
- What is the availability of resources needed to keep the shelter open including staff, equipment, and supplies?
- Is there a Long-Term Recovery Committee in place or planned?

The answers to these questions will help your community decide whether to close sheltering or continue to shelter. If the MC/EA needs have not been met, additional support will be available from the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, Convoy of Hope, and other National VOAD members.

If extensive damage has occurred, disaster survivors may not be able to return immediately to their homes. Therefore, shelters may have to remain open for extended periods, providing a place to live, food to eat, and other essential services while homes are being restored or until alternate housing is identified and/or prepared.

As residents are able to move back into their homes, the shelter population will begin to dwindle. There needs to be a plan for closing the shelters.

- Ensure that all facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies are accounted for and returned, and that the site and equipment are returned to a ready-state for future deployment or use.
- Plan for releasing shelter staff. Resolve any discrepancies through agreements to make repairs to damage, etc.
- Work with emergency management to process any invoices and other reimbursement documentation.
- Find a safe and convenient place to retain records.
- Contact your State OEM to obtain a copy of and training for the Shelter Field Guide.
Feeding

The same considerations used for sheltering must be addressed for a feeding operation. Keep in mind, though, that feeding may have occurred even though shelters were not needed.

The following are some questions to consider:

- Are shelters still open that require feeding support?
- Can you continue to support the feeding operation?
- Are other options now available, such as grocery stores or restaurants?
- Has the power been restored?
- Have the roads been cleared of debris so people can return to their homes?
- What is the availability of your feeding resources? Are additional resources available?

The same steps you took for sheltering need to be taken when the decision is made that feeding services are no longer needed. This includes facilities, equipment and supplies, staff, invoices and reimbursement, and records retention.

Distribution of Emergency Supplies

Plan to stop the distribution when the infrastructure is restored to support any remaining needs. If the event escalates, this is where agreements you have in place ahead of time may be activated.

The following are some questions to consider:

- Have the needs of the disaster survivors been met?
- Have all the supplies available been distributed?

Reunification

Other community resources utilized for reunification are closed out when there are no more requests or reports of displaced persons. The American Red Cross Safe and Well web site and phone registration is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as is social media.
You should now be able to:

- Describe the impact planning and operational actions will have on providing Mass Care and Emergency Assistance services in your community.
- Name the planning and operational actions.
**Family Emergency Plan**

Make sure your family has a plan in case of an emergency. Before an emergency happens, sit down together and decide how you will get in contact with each other, where you will go and what you will do in an emergency. Keep a copy of this plan in your emergency supply kit or another safe place where you can access it in the event of a disaster.

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<tr>
<td>Evacuation Location:</td>
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Fill out the following information for each family member and keep it up to date.

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Write down where your family spends the most time: work, school and other places you frequent. Schools, daycare providers, workplaces and apartment buildings should all have site-specific emergency plans that you and your family need to know about.

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Other places you frequent

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### Important Information

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<td>Homeowners/Rental Insurance:</td>
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<td>Veterinarian/Kennel (for pets):</td>
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Dial 911 for Emergencies
Family Emergency Plan

Make sure your family has a plan in case of an emergency. Fill out these cards and give one to each member of your family to make sure they know who to call and where to meet in case of an emergency.

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<th>Family Emergency Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td>OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT NAME:</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>TELEPHONE:</td>
<td>TELEPHONE:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:</td>
<td>OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dial 911 for emergencies.</td>
<td>Dial 911 for emergencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SM-7.26 Unit 7: Planning and Operational Actions