

National Response Framework

Fourth Edition
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Homeland Security

Executive Summary

The National Response Framework (NRF) provides foundational emergency management doctrine for how the Nation responds to all types of incidents. The NRF is built on scalable, flexible, and adaptable concepts identified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation. The structures, roles, and responsibilities described in this Framework can be partially or fully implemented in the context of a threat or hazard, in anticipation of a significant event, or in response to an incident. Implementation of the structures and procedures described herein allows for a scaled response, delivery of specific resources and capabilities, and a level of coordination appropriate to each incident.

Responding to disasters and emergencies requires the cooperation of a variety of organizations; the larger or more complex the incident, the greater the number and variety of organizations that must respond. Think of a residential fire: Firefighters are leading the charge; public works may be on scene providing traffic control; police are providing security; emergency medical services personnel are triaging, transporting, and redistributing injured to local hospitals; and a local nonprofit or voluntary organization (e.g., American Red Cross and Salvation Army) may be on hand to assist displaced residents. For large disasters, such as major hurricanes or earthquakes, the incident complexity is increased as others—such as states or tribes and, ultimately, the Federal Government—become involved. Businesses, voluntary organizations, and other elements of the private sector are also key stakeholders, providing the essential services that must be restored following an incident. The NRF provides the foundation for how these organizations coordinate, integrate, and unify their response.

The unprecedented scale of recent disasters has spurred continued innovation in response operations and highlighted the need for further progress to build resilient capabilities to respond to disasters of increasing frequency and magnitude. This fourth edition of the NRF embraces lessons-learned from those disasters and shares emerging best practices.

Since publication of the third edition of the NRF in 2016, disaster response operations have underscored the paramount importance of sustaining essential community lifelines. The Framework defines community lifelines as those services that enable the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and are essential to human health and safety or economic security. If disrupted, rapid stabilization of community lifelines is essential to restoring a sense of normalcy. Recent disasters have illuminated two underlying features of community lifelines that highlight opportunities to strengthen response planning and operations.

First, community lifelines are interdependent and vulnerable to cascading failures. For example, communications and electric power systems rely on each other to function; severe damage to one will disrupt the other. Most lifelines also rely on complex supply chains. Water and wastewater service depend on the resupply of a broad array of chemicals and—if power goes out—fuel for emergency generators. However, in a severe natural or human-caused incident, those supply chains themselves may be broken.

Second, community lifeline stabilization relies on businesses and infrastructure owners and operators who have the expertise and primary responsibility for managing their systems in emergencies. Accordingly, new doctrine and coordination mechanisms are needed to enable the private sector to play a larger, more comprehensive role in preparedness and response activities.

The NRF is structured to help jurisdictions, citizens, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and businesses develop whole community plans, integrate continuity plans, and build capabilities to respond to cascading failures among businesses, supply chains, and infrastructure sectors, as well as collaborate with the private sector and NGOs to stabilize community lifelines and enable restoration

of services in severe incidents. Critical infrastructure sector leadership (sector-specific agencies, government coordinating councils, and sector coordinating councils) create an established network to collaborate with their respective private sector partners and support cross-sector[1] response operations. Often, Emergency Support Functions (ESF) work with sector leadership to bolster preparedness for cross-sector collaboration. This fourth edition of the NRF describes new initiatives that leverage existing networks and better integrate business interests and infrastructure owners and operators into the heart of emergency management.

The NRF describes ways to improve coordination and response structures to build preparedness for catastrophic incidents. Stabilizing community lifelines in catastrophic incidents is vital and extraordinarily difficult. Communities cannot meet these challenges solely by scaling up existing plans and capabilities. Rather, new mechanisms are needed to supplement and integrate those already in place and facilitate cross-sector coordination, while respecting the roles of private sector partners and authorities of agencies at all levels of government.

A new ESF #14 – Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure is introduced to focus on engaging private sector interests and infrastructure owners and operators—particularly those in sectors not currently aligned to other ESFs—and conducting cross-sector analysis to help inform decision making. ESF #14 relies on other ESFs aligned with a critical infrastructure sector to continue coordination with their corresponding sector during response efforts. ESF #14 helps coordinate multi-sector response operations between (or across) the government and private sector for natural or human-caused catastrophic incidents that jeopardize national public health and safety, the economy, and national security.

This edition of the Framework also builds on the response approach in previous editions to address national security emergencies. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America notes that potential adversaries are developing advanced weapons and capabilities that could threaten U.S. critical infrastructure.[2] Adversaries may also strategically target attacks to exploit interdependencies between infrastructure sectors and magnify cascading failures between them, posing incident response challenges above and beyond those created by earthquakes or other catastrophic natural hazards. The initiatives in this Framework address the resulting challenges for consequence management in ways that supplement and support other government, private sector, and NGO plans and coordinating structures.

[1] Cross-sector operations are those actions taken by public and private sector organizations from one or more of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors to help entities or facilities associated with other sectors respond to an incident, being focused on preventing or mitigating cascading failures between sectors and restoring critical supply chains.

[2] For more information on the National Security Strategy of the United States of America, see https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf.

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Introduction

The National Preparedness System outlines an organized process for the whole community[3] to move forward with its preparedness activities and achieve the National Preparedness Goal. The National Response Framework (NRF) sets the strategy and doctrine for how the whole community builds, sustains, and delivers the response core capabilities identified in the National Preparedness Goal in an integrated manner with the other mission areas. The fourth edition of the NRF emphasizes enhancing the unity of effort between the government and the private sector through better coordination and collaboration.

Evolution of the Framework

The NRF builds on over 25 years of federal response guidance, beginning with the Federal Response Plan, published in 1992, and the National Response Plan, published in 2004. This fourth edition **of the NRF reorganizes and streamlines the previous version of the NRF, expands principles and concepts to better integrate government and private sector response efforts, and introduces the community lifelines concept and terminology.**

> This document supersedes the National Response Framework, Third Edition that was issued in June 2016 and becomes effective 60 days after publication.

Community lifelines are those services that enable the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and are essential to human health and safety or economic security. In serious but purely local incidents, interruptions of water service, electric power, and other community lifeline components are typically brief and easy to mitigate. However, severe and widespread incidents can halt lifeline services for many weeks or months. Such disruptions are especially extensive in catastrophic incidents and may result in mass casualties and other cascading consequences.

Making community lifelines a core focus of incident response within the NRF offers unique benefits for incidents ranging from small-scale to catastrophic disasters. By building capabilities to stabilize[4] and accelerate the restoration of community lifeline services, it will be possible to save countless lives, limit damage to the economy, help maintain essential services for critical national security installations, reduce the initial impacts of disasters, and facilitate recovery operations. While the primary focus of incident response remains on stabilizing community lifelines, other secondary considerations regarding the natural and cultural environment and economic factors are equally as important.

[3] Whole community includes individuals and communities, businesses, private and public sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and all levels of government (local, regional/metropolitan, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and federal). Whole community is defined in the National Preparedness Goal as "a focus on enabling the participation in national preparedness activities of a wider range of players from the private sector, including nongovernmental organizations and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of all levels of governmental in order to foster better coordination and working relationships."

[4] Stabilization occurs when immediate threats to life and property are anticipated, resourced, and managed and basic community lifeline services are provided to survivors.

Community lifelines provide a valuable decision-making construct to integrate cross-sector[5] response operations and reporting. Each lifeline depends on multiple infrastructure sectors, businesses, and supply chains to function. Focusing on community lifelines allows emergency managers and their partners to account for these complex interdependencies and prioritize response operations to achieve high-impact, multi-sector benefits. The Framework describes how the resources and capabilities of the Federal Government support such operations, while the new Emergency Support Function (ESF) #14 – Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure Annex describes how it facilitates coordination and collaboration with business and infrastructure owners and operators to provide assistance and integrate the private sector's support during response, particularly for those sectors not currently aligned to other ESFs. Additional detail on the community lifelines can be found in the *Prioritized Stabilization of Community Lifelines* section.

Finally, the Framework's focus on community lifelines necessitates deeper collaboration with the private sector and nongovernmental organizations (NGO). During the disasters of 2017 and 2018, individual businesses and infrastructure owners and operators (including public and private sectors) forged innovative, collaborative relationships with government agencies to help prioritize and accelerate the stabilization of community lifeline services. The fourth edition of the NRF and ESF #14 – Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure Annex institutionalize their progress and build upon it in ways that respect the authorities, responsibilities, and roles of all public, private, and NGO partners essential to incident response.

Framework Purpose and Organization

The NRF is a guide to how the Nation responds to all types of disasters and emergencies. The NRF is built on scalable, flexible, and adaptable concepts identified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to align key roles and responsibilities across the Nation. The NRF describes specific authorities and best practices for managing incidents that range from the serious but purely local to those that are catastrophic and national in scope.

Within the NRF, the term "response" includes actions to save lives, protect property and the environment, stabilize the incident, and meet basic human needs following an incident. Response also includes the execution of emergency plans and actions to enable recovery. The NRF describes doctrine for managing all types of disasters or emergencies, regardless of scale, scope, and complexity. The goals and objectives herein explain common response disciplines and processes that have been developed at all levels of government (local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area,[6] and federal) and have matured over time.

To achieve the National Preparedness Goal, the objectives of the NRF are to do the following:

- Describe coordinating structures, as well as key roles and responsibilities for integrating capabilities across the whole community, to support the efforts of governments, the private sector, and NGOs in responding to actual and potential incidents;
- Describe how unity of effort among public and private sectors, as well as NGOs, supports the stabilization of community lifelines and prioritized restoration of infrastructure during an incident

[5] Cross-sector operations are those actions taken by public and private sector organizations from one or more of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors to help entities or facilities associated with other sectors respond to an incident, focused on preventing or mitigating cascading failures between sectors and restoring critical supply chains. These operations include measures taken by infrastructure owners and operators, businesses, and their government partners to account for cross-sector interdependencies in incident response operations.

[6] Per the Stafford Act, insular areas include Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Other statutes or departments and agencies may define the term "insular area" differently.

and enables recovery, including the elements that support economic security, such as restoration of business operations and other commercial activities;

- Describe the steps needed to prepare for delivering the response core capabilities, including capabilities brought through businesses and infrastructure owners and operators in an incident;
- Foster integration and coordination of activities for response actions; and
- Provide guidance through doctrine and establish the foundation for continued improvement of the Response Federal Interagency Operational Plan (FIOP), its incident annexes, as well as department and agency plans that implement the FIOP.

The NRF also advances progress under the National Security Strategy of the United States of America. The Framework helps achieve the strategy's first pillar: to "protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life." To accomplish this goal, the strategy calls for initiatives to strengthen the Nation's ability to withstand and recover rapidly from attacks and natural disasters. The NRF is structured to help achieve these goals by establishing a new federal ESF coordinating structure to help mitigate the impact of catastrophic incidents on community lifelines and account for the risk that adversaries will seek to complicate and disrupt U.S. response operations.

The NRF is composed of a base document, ESF annexes, and support annexes. The annexes provide detailed information to assist with the implementation of the NRF.

- ESF annexes describe the federal coordinating structures that group resources and capabilities into functional areas most frequently needed in a national response.
- Support annexes describe other mechanisms by which support is organized among private sector, NGO, and federal partners. The support annexes describe the essential supporting processes and considerations common to most incidents. Content found within the support annexes is superseded by changes and updates to legislation. The support annexes include the following:
  - Financial management
  - International coordination
  - Public affairs
  - Tribal relations
  - Volunteer and donations management
  - Worker safety and health

The Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Support Annex and Private Sector Coordination Support Annex, which supplemented previous versions of the NRF, have been superseded in this fourth edition of the NRF by ESF #14 – Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure Annex, which has been added as part of this updated framework. All references to these support annexes within the ESF or support annexes should be read as referring to the ESF #14 – Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure.

Scope

The NRF is a framework for all types of threats and hazards, ranging from accidents, technological hazards, natural disasters, and human-caused incidents. This Framework is utilized to implement NIMS and describes whole community coordinating structures and response activities; in particular, the Framework outlines government, private sector, and nongovernmental roles to reinforce

collaborative incident response.[7] The NRF also describes the structure and mechanisms for national-level policy and operational direction for incident management to ensure timely and effective federal support to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governmental activities and survivors. The NRF is applicable to all federal, local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area departments and agencies that participate in operations requiring a coordinated federal response.

NRF elements can be implemented at any time for any hazard, including the employment of ESF mechanisms. The structures, roles, and responsibilities described herein can be partially or fully implemented in the context of a threat or hazard, in anticipation of a significant event, or in response to an incident. Implementation of NRF structures and procedures allows for a scaled response, delivery of the specific resources and capabilities, and a level of coordination appropriate to each incident.

The response mission area includes the capabilities necessary to stabilize an incident, save lives, protect property and the environment, meet basic human needs, restore community lifeline services and other basic community functionality, and establish a safe and secure environment to facilitate the integration of recovery activities.

In this fourth edition of the NRF, the thresholds for catastrophic incident response may vary depending on one's perspective. A localized flood can be catastrophic to an individual family who lost their home and possessions, a severe tornado can be catastrophic to a town or city, and a hurricane can be catastrophic to a state or territory. At the national level, a catastrophic incident[8] is one of such extreme and remarkable severity or magnitude that the Nation's collective capability to manage all response requirements would be overwhelmed, thereby posing potential threats to national security, national economic security, and/or the public health and safety of the Nation. A national catastrophic incident implies that the necessary resources are not available within expected timeframes for incident response. During a national catastrophic incident, decision makers would be forced to consider the landscape of requirements and prioritize resources to manage shortfalls rather than to address all needs at once. Such a situation would also require the extraordinary means of mobilizing and prioritizing national resources to alleviate human suffering; protect lives and property; reduce damage to natural, cultural, and historic resources; stabilize the Nation's economy; and ensure national security.

In this Framework, the term "incident" includes any occurrence, natural or manmade, that necessitates a response to protect life or property and includes planned events, as well as emergencies or disasters of all kinds and sizes. The NRF's structures and procedures address how federal departments and agencies coordinate support for local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments and how government at all levels works in unity with private sector and NGOs.

Nothing in the NRF is intended to alter or impede the ability of a local, state, tribal, territorial, or insular area government or Federal Government department or agency to carry out its authorities or meet its responsibilities under applicable laws, Executive orders, and directives.

[7] The NRF must be consistent with all pertinent statutes and policies, particularly those involving privacy and civil and human rights, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

[8] The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 defines the term "catastrophic incident" as "any natural disaster, act of terrorism, or other man-made disaster that results in extraordinary levels of casualties or damage or disruption severely affecting the population (including mass evacuations), infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, or government functions in an area."

Intended Audience

The NRF is intended to be used by communities; the private sector; NGOs; local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments; and the Federal Government, as well as other entities involved in response. The private sector includes for-profit and nonprofit organizations, formal and informal structures, commerce, and industries that comprise the national economy and are not part of a government structure. NGOs are a distinct category of organizations within the private sector that can include voluntary, ethnic, faith-based, veteran-based, disability,[9] relief agency, and animal welfare organizations, among others, and are referenced separately. This all-inclusive whole community approach focuses efforts and enables a full range of stakeholders to participate in national preparedness activities and to be full partners in incident response, including emergency management practitioners, first responders, and community leaders.

Infrastructure owners and operators (in private and public sectors), and other elements of the private sector, are especially important partners for incident response and a key audience for the Framework. These partners are vital for strengthening the coordination between industry and government that is necessary to stabilize community lifelines after major incidents or events. They are also crucial partners for creating the plans and doctrine to support essential functions for cross-sector response operations, especially where their ability to volunteer capabilities and expertise provides vital (and in some cases irreplaceable) contributions to protecting public health and safety. Moreover, because catastrophic incidents will create far more requests for emergency resources and types of government assistance than can be immediately fulfilled, infrastructure owners and operators and other commercial interests can help government agencies establish objective, nationwide criteria to help inform the allocation of scarce resources to promote stabilization efforts, restore infrastructure, and to reduce morbidity and mortality.

The fourth edition of the NRF describes how the whole community contributes to and benefits from national preparedness and integrated incident response. This includes children;[10] older adults; individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs;[11] those from religious, racial, and ethnically diverse backgrounds; people with limited English proficiency; and owners of animals, including household pets and service and assistance animals. Their individual contributions and needs must be incorporated into response planning and delivery of the core capabilities. For further information, see the *Core Capabilities* section.

Guiding Principles

The following principles establish fundamental doctrine for the response mission area to support locally executed, state managed, and federally supported disaster operations: (1) engaged partnership; (2) tiered response; (3) scalable, flexible, and adaptable operational capabilities; (4) unity of effort

[9] An individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (an "actual disability") or a record of a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity ("record of") or an actual or perceived impairment, whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity that is not both transitory and minor ("regarded as"). Individuals with disabilities have civil rights protections that may not be waived under any circumstances, including throughout emergencies and disasters.

[10] Children require a unique set of considerations across the core capabilities contained within this document. Their needs must be taken into consideration as part of any integrated planning effort.

[11] Access and functional needs refer to persons who may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to maintaining health, independence, communication, transportation, support, services, self-determination, and medical care. Individuals in need of additional response assistance may include those who have disabilities, live in institutionalized settings, are older adults, are children, are from diverse cultures, have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking, or are transportation disadvantaged.

through unified command; and (5) readiness to act. These principles are rooted in the federal system and the U.S. Constitution's division of responsibilities between federal and state governments. These principles reflect the history of emergency management and the distilled wisdom of responders and leaders across the whole community.

Engaged Partnership

Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments understand their needs best and play a critical role in involving the whole community in preparing for and responding to disasters in order to manage risk to communities and infrastructure.

Those who lead emergency response efforts must communicate and support engagement with the whole community by developing shared goals and aligning capabilities to reduce the scope and duration of impacts to any jurisdiction in times of crisis. Layered, mutually supporting capabilities of individuals, communities, the private sector, NGOs, and governments at all levels allow for coordinated planning in times of calm and effective response in times of crisis. Engaged partnership and coalition building include ongoing clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate communication to ensure an appropriate response. [12]

Partnership engagement entails continuous adaptation and improvements for incident preparedness and continuity of operations against all types of threats and hazards. The spectrum of viable threats is expanding. Most notably, cyber threats to the Nation's critical infrastructure and the community lifelines are intensifying. New challenges for incident response are also emerging. For example, in conjunction with cyberattacks, adversaries may spread false disaster reporting via social media and other means in order to incite panic and disrupt response operations. Thus, continuous engagement establishing regular and clear communication between response partners is essential to ensuring that accurate, accessible, and actionable information and situational awareness is made available in response to these and other emerging threats.

Tiered Response

Most incidents begin and end locally and are managed and executed at the local or tribal level. Incidents require a unified response from local agencies, the private sector, tribes, and NGOs. Some may require additional support from neighboring jurisdictions or state governments. A smaller number of incidents require federal support.[13] Incidents that occur within or along the borders of federally managed lands and state, tribal, and territorial lands require unity of effort among federal, state, tribal, or territorial governments at the local level. National response processes are structured to provide tiered levels of support when additional resources or capabilities are needed.

[12] Information, warnings, and communications associated with emergency management must ensure effective communication, such as through the use of appropriate auxiliary aids and services (e.g., interpreters, captioning, and alternative format documents) for individuals with disabilities and provide meaningful access to limited English-proficient individuals. Accessible messaging should be employed for individuals who use assistive technology and employ non-technological means to reach those who do not have access to communication technology and those living in remote areas.

[13] Certain incidents such as a pandemic or cyberattack may not be limited to a specific geographic area and may be managed at the local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, or federal level, depending on the nature of the incident.

When all levels of government become engaged, a response is federally supported, state managed, and locally executed, with tribes, territories, and insular area governments often managing the response, as well. The Federal Government's support and response during disasters build on and are affected by the capacity of state, tribal, territorial, insular, and local governments, as well as the business community and NGOs. Preparedness efforts with partners at all levels increase the effectiveness of tiered response.

Scalable, Flexible, and Adaptable Operational Capabilities

As incidents change in size, scope, and complexity, response efforts must adapt to meet evolving requirements. The number, type, and sources of resources must be able to expand rapidly to meet the changing needs associated with a given incident and its cascading effects. As needs grow and change, response processes must remain nimble, adaptable, and resilient. The structures and processes described in the NRF must be able to apply resources from the whole community to support disaster survivors and stabilize the community. As incidents stabilize, response efforts must be flexible to facilitate the integration of recovery activities.

Unity of Effort Through Unified Command

The NIMS concept of unified command[14] maximizes response efforts while integrating and respecting the roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of all participating organizations. The Incident Command System (ICS), as prescribed by NIMS, is important to ensuring interoperability across multijurisdictional or multiagency incident management activities. Unified command enables unity of effort when no single jurisdiction, agency, or organization has primary authority and/or the resources to manage an incident on its own. The use of unified command enables jurisdictions and those with authority or responsibility for the incident to jointly manage and direct incident activities through establishment of common incident objectives, strategies, and a single incident action plan. ICS is used by all levels of government, as well as by many NGOs and private sector organizations.

Readiness To Act

From individuals and communities to businesses, nonprofit, faith-based, and voluntary organizations and all levels of government (local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and federal), national response depends on the ability to act decisively. A forward-leaning posture is imperative for incidents that may expand rapidly in size, scope, or complexity, as well as incidents that occur without warning. Decisive action is often required to save lives and protect property and the environment. Although some risk to responders may be unavoidable, all response personnel are responsible for anticipating and managing risk through proper planning, organizing, equipping, training, and exercising.

[14] The ICS "unified command" concept is distinct from the military use of this term. Concepts of "command" and "unity of command" have distinct legal and cultural meanings for military forces and military operations. Military forces always remain under the control of the military chain of command and are subject to redirection or recall at any time. Military forces do not operate under the command of the incident commander or under the unified command structure, but they do coordinate with response partners and work toward a unity of effort while maintaining their internal chain of command.

Prior to and during catastrophic incidents or a national security emergency[15], especially those that occur with little or no notice, the Federal Government may mobilize and deploy assets in anticipation of a formal request from the state, tribe, territory, insular area, or under existing federal response authorities. Proactive efforts are intended to ensure that federal resources reach the scene in time to assist in reducing disruption of normal functions of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments and are done in coordination and collaboration with the governments, private sector entities, and NGOs, when possible.

Foundational Components

Prioritized Stabilization of Community Lifelines

Stabilizing community lifelines is the primary effort during response to lessen threats and hazards to public health and safety, the economy, and security. A community lifeline enables the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and is essential to human health and safety or economic security. Together, the community lifelines reframe incident information to provide decision makers with root cause and impact analysis. This construct maximizes the effectiveness of federally supported, state managed, and locally executed response. Figure 1 identifies the seven community lifelines: Safety and Security; Food, Water, Shelter; Health and Medical; Energy (Power & Fuel); Communications; Transportation; and Hazardous Material.



Figure 1: Community Lifelines for Incident Stabilization

The seven community lifelines represent only the most basic services a community relies on and which, when stable, enable all other activity within a community. The lifelines are designed to enable emergency managers, infrastructure owners and operators, and other partners to analyze the root cause of an incident impact and then prioritize and deploy resources to effectively stabilize the lifeline. As explained later in the NRF, **ESFs deliver core capabilities to stabilize community lifelines for an effective response**. Similar to the ESFs, other whole community organizations can work together to stabilize lifelines and meet disaster needs. The community lifelines do not directly cover all important aspects of community life that can be affected by an incident, including impacts to natural, historical, and cultural resources. For example, financial and economic issues important to the life and safety of affected individuals may also arise indirectly from impacts to lifelines during an incident.

[15] National security emergency means any occurrence, including natural disaster, military attack, technological emergency, or other emergency, that seriously degrades or threatens the national security of the United States, as defined in Executive Order 12656.

Example of Impacts on Financial Services After a Community Lifeline Disruption

A tornado has caused massive devastation in a rural town. Among the major impacts to community lifelines is the community's inability to access money.

- Power outages have kept several bank branches closed and automated teller machines (ATM) inoperable, and merchants who are open despite the power outages are only able to accept cash transactions.
- Some merchants, ATMs, and bank branches are already open and have been energized through grid or generator power. However, communications outages prevent them from accessing systems to process an electronic transaction.
- Transportation issues (road closures and blockages) limit survivors' ability to travel to the limited merchants, ATM locations, and bank branches in the area, as well as responders' ability to provide assets to stabilize critical infrastructure.

These cumulative effects, while incredibly disruptive to the community, are caused by a confluence of impacts to specific lifelines. By using the community lifeline construct and root cause analysis, emergency managers can assess that the major limiting factors restricting community access to money are through the power, transportation, and communications lifelines. Accordingly, a local emergency manager may alleviate the situation by considering options, such as prioritized route clearance for emergency access by power and communications crews, generators for temporary power, or deployment of mobile cell towers, for establishing connectivity until other infrastructure is restored.

The community lifelines are composed of multiple components that encompass infrastructure, assets, and services. Table 1 provides a brief description of each community lifeline but is not a comprehensive list of all components that should be analyzed.

Table 1: Community Lifeline Descriptions

Community Lifeline	Description
Safety and Security	• Law enforcement and government services, as well as the associated assets that maintain communal security, provide search and rescue, evacuations, and firefighting capabilities, and promote responder safety.
Food, Water, Shelter	• Support systems that enable the sustainment of life, such as water treatment, transmission, and distribution systems; food retail and distribution networks; wastewater collection and treatment systems; as well as sheltering, and agriculture.
Health and Medical	• Infrastructure and service providers for medical care, public health, patient movement, fatality management, behavioral health, veterinary support, and health or medical supply chains.
Energy	• Service providers for electric power infrastructure, composed of generation, transmission, and distribution systems, as well as gas and liquid fuel processing, transportation, and delivery systems. Disruptions can have a limiting effect on the functionality of other community lifelines.
Communications	• Infrastructure owners and operators of broadband Internet, cellular networks, landline telephony, cable services (to include undersea

Community Lifeline	Description
	cable), satellite communications services, and broadcast networks (radio and television). Communication systems encompass a large set of diverse modes of delivery and technologies, often intertwined but largely operating independently. Services include elements such as alerts, warnings, and messages, as well as 911 and dispatch. Also includes accessibility of financial services.
Transportation	• Multiple modes of transportation that often serve complementary functions and create redundancy, adding to the inherent resilience in overall transportation networks. Transportation infrastructure generally includes highway/roadways, mass transit, railway, aviation, maritime, pipeline, and intermodal systems.
Hazardous Material	• Systems that mitigate threats to public health/welfare and the environment. This includes assessment of facilities that use, generate, and store hazardous substances, as well as specialized conveyance assets and efforts to identify, contain, and remove incident debris, pollution, contaminants, oil or other hazardous substances.

As described in Table 1, community lifelines rely on multiple government entities, businesses, and infrastructure sectors to function. As a result, response operations to stabilize a lifeline are unlikely to fit within a single department, agency, ESF, infrastructure sector, or industry. Moreover, because these sectors and the community lifelines they support are interdependent, failures in one will cascade across to others.

Accounting for these interdependencies and their associated requirements for cross-sector assistance they entail poses overarching challenges in building preparedness for complex incidents. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in coordination with the sector-specific agencies, has identified National Critical Functions[16] that enable the Federal Government, in partnership with infrastructure owners and operators, to improve the risk management process before and after an incident and can support community lifeline assessments and stabilization efforts.

Community lifelines can be used by all levels of government, the private sector, and other partners to facilitate operational coordination and drive outcome-based response. Figure 2 shows how community lifelines are applied to support decision-making.

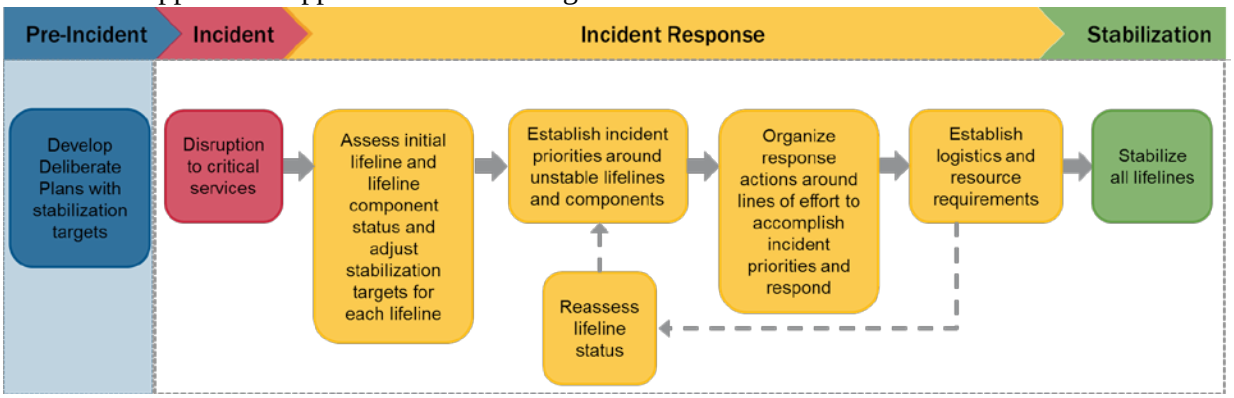


Figure 2: The Application of Community Lifelines to Support Emergency Management

[16] National Critical Functions are the functions of government and the private sector so vital to the United States that their disruption, corruption, or dysfunction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination thereof.

After an incident, initial assessments of the community lifelines (i.e., whether they are impacted and to what extent) help establish incident priorities and objectives that drive response actions. Continuously reassessing the status of community lifelines enables decision-makers to adjust operations in ways that can accelerate incident stabilization.

Using the community lifelines enables emergency managers and decision makers at all levels (e.g., business and infrastructure owners and operators, economic development agencies, comptrollers, public health officials, and healthcare providers) to understand and assess impacts on a community, identify limiting factors, and quickly develop solutions following an incident. Decision makers must rapidly determine the scope, complexity, and interdependent impacts of a disaster, so applying the community lifeline construct will allow them to do the following:

- Prioritize, sequence, and focus response efforts toward maintaining or restoring the most critical services and infrastructure;
- Utilize a common lexicon to facilitate communication across various stakeholders;
- Promote a response that facilitates unity of effort among the whole community (e.g., Federal Government; state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and local governments; and private sector and nongovernmental entities); and
- Clarify which components of the disaster are complex (emergent) and/or complicated (difficult), requiring cross-sector coordination.

Response activities organized around the community lifelines allow local, state, tribal, territorial, insular, and Federal Government emergency managers, along with private sector and nongovernmental partners, to better align, sequence, and prioritize limited public and private sector resources. The intent is to efficiently stabilize the incident by anticipating, resourcing, and managing immediate threats to life and property and to set the conditions for longer-term infrastructure restoration and economic and community recovery. Community lifeline stabilization is not the end state in itself for incident response and recovery, but a construct to achieve efficacy and efficiency throughout the disaster response phase.

National Incident Management System

The purpose of NIMS is to provide a common approach to managing incidents. NIMS concepts provide for standardized but flexible incident management and support practices that emphasize common principles, a consistent approach for operational structures and supporting mechanisms, and an integrated approach to resource management. The response protocols and structures described in the NRF align with NIMS. NIMS provides the template for the management of incidents, regardless of size, scope, cause, or complexity, while the NRF provides the structure and mechanisms for policy implementation and incident response. Standardizing national response doctrine on NIMS integrates the capabilities and resources of various governmental jurisdictions, incident management and emergency response disciplines, NGOs, and the private sector into a cohesive, coordinated, and seamless national framework for incident response.

All of the components of NIMS—resource management, command and coordination, and communications and information management—support response. The NIMS concept of unified command is described in the command and coordination component of NIMS. This concept is essential to effective response operations because it addresses the importance of (1) developing a single set of objectives; (2) using a collective, strategic approach; (3) improving information flow and coordination; (4) creating a common understanding of joint priorities and limitations; (5) ensuring that no agency's legal authorities are compromised or neglected; and (6) optimizing the combined efforts of all participants under a single plan.

Mutual Aid

Communities apply NIMS principles to integrate response plans and resources across jurisdictions, departments, the private sector, and NGOs. Various public and private mutual aid systems can be leveraged. Neighboring communities or organizations play a key role by providing support through a network of mutual aid and assistance agreements that identify the resources that communities may share during an incident. Additionally, private sector organizations often establish mutual aid agreements with each other to increase capabilities and expedite their response.

The ability to provide mutual aid accurately and rapidly is critical during disasters, but mutual aid partners require a common language and process to support the sharing of qualified personnel. The National Qualification System (NQS) addresses this challenge by providing a common language and approach for qualifying, certifying, and credentialing incident management and support personnel. NQS provides the tools for jurisdictions and organizations to share resources seamlessly. Using the NQS approach helps to ensure personnel deploying through mutual aid agreements and compacts have the required capabilities to perform their assigned duties.[17]

Core Capabilities

Each mission area—prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery—identifies core capabilities required to address common threats and hazards. Using the core capabilities construct enables communities and organizations to focus on specific preparedness measures necessary to ensure that the capabilities are available when needed. By allowing communities and organizations to quantify response requirements and measure response capacity, core capabilities are the key performance management tool in emergency preparedness.[18]

The National Preparedness Goal describes the core capabilities necessary to be prepared for all threats and hazards. The core capabilities provide a common vocabulary describing the significant functions that must be maintained and executed across the whole community to achieve the goal of a "secure and resilient nation."

Prevention: Avoiding, preventing, or stopping a threatened or actual act of terrorism. Within the context of national preparedness, the term "prevention" refers to dealing with imminent threats.

Protection: Securing the homeland against acts of terrorism and human-caused or natural disasters.

Mitigation: Reducing loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters.

Response: Saving lives, stabilizing community lifelines, protecting property and the environment, and meeting basic human needs after an incident has occurred.

Recovery: Assisting impacted communities with restoration and revitalization.

The response core capabilities are the activities that generally must be accomplished in incident response, regardless of which levels of government are involved. While core capabilities are organized by mission area, they do not operate exclusively within that mission area. Actions related to one core capability often can inform actions associated with another.

[17] For more information on NQS, see https://www.fema.gov/national-qualification-system; for more information on NQS typing tools, see https://rtlt.preptoolkit.fema.gov/Public/Combined.
[18] For a full list of the core capabilities, see https://www.fema.gov/core-capabilities.

Community Lifeline Stabilization and the Core Capabilities

Core capabilities are used to organize, analyze, and build the functions and services needed in response. The core capabilities developed during the preparedness cycle are applied throughout response to stabilize community lifelines and enable recovery.

By engaging the whole community to build and deliver the response core capabilities, the Nation is better prepared to respond to a threat or hazard; to assist in restoring basic services, community functionality, and economic activity; and to facilitate the integration of recovery activities. Table 2 shows how response core capabilities may relate to the community lifelines.

Table 2: Examples of a Steady-State Relationship Between Community Lifelines and Response Core Capabilities

Community Lifeline*	Related Response Core Capabilities**	Infrastructure Systems	Situational Assessment	Operational Coordination	Public Information and Warning	Planning
Safety and Security	• On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement • Fire Management and Suppression • Mass Search and Rescue Operations • Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services • Environmental Response/Health and Safety					
Food, Water, Shelter	• Mass Care Services • Logistics and Supply Chain Management					
Health and Medical	• Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services • Fatality Management Services • Environmental Response/Health and Safety • Logistics and Supply Chain Management • Mass Care Services					
Energy (Power & Fuel)	• Logistics and Supply Chain Management					
Communications	• Operational Communications • Public Information and Warning					
Transportation	• Critical Transportation					
Hazardous Material	• Environmental Response/Health and Safety					

* Community Lifelines: How emergency managers assess and prioritize employment of capabilities for stabilization.
** Core Capabilities: An interoperable means to characterize capabilities that may be assessed, built, or validated during preparedness or applied to response operations.

Integration Among Mission Areas

Potential points of intersection between the response mission area and other mission areas include the following:

Prevention. Response organizations coordinate with those responsible for preventing imminent acts of terrorism or an attack (e.g., a significant cyber incident causing cascading and/or physical impacts) to understand both potential and specific threats and to prepare accordingly by creating plans for general threats and crisis action plans for credible threats.

- When an incident may have been caused by an intentional act, response organizations coordinate closely with law enforcement agencies to attribute the cause and prevent additional follow-on instances.
- Response agencies coordinate with law enforcement agencies to enable themselves to prepare, train, stage, and plan for the delivery of consequence management capabilities.
- Response agencies must coordinate with the owners of properties impacted by a particular incident who have the first responsibility for prevention, protection, and response.

Protection. Protection of critical infrastructure systems and implementation of plans for the rapid restoration of commercial activities and critical infrastructure operations are crucial aspects of the protection mission area. Many of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors[19] within the protection mission area are also represented in the response mission area. The existing infrastructure plans and coordination mechanisms (e.g., sector-specific agencies and councils) provide strong foundations for strengthening incident response plans and capabilities. As part of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan, public and private sector partners in each of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors and agencies at all levels of government have developed and maintain sector-specific plans that focus on the unique operating conditions and risk landscape within that sector.

- Response agencies should utilize the sector coordination constructs (e.g., sector-specific agencies or sector coordinating councils) to elicit advice and recommendations regarding systemic vulnerabilities, cross-sector interdependencies, and sector-level challenges that could hinder restoration.
- Impacts to infrastructure may result in the need for consequence management (e.g., cyberattacks).

Mitigation. Effective mitigation efforts directly limit the impact of an emergency, disaster, or attack on community lifelines and systems, thereby reducing the required scale of response capabilities needed for an incident. The National Mitigation Investment Strategy recommends actions for all national stakeholders involved in disaster resilience to reduce risks to and impacts on lifelines, buildings, infrastructure, ecosystems, and cultural, historic, and natural resources. Planning, response, and regulatory organizations coordinate to reduce risks to critical infrastructure by evaluating potential threats, encouraging resiliency in infrastructure, and planning for redundancy in services. These organizations often have information and the data about hazards and risks that can be shared with response personnel to improve response planning and execution.

- Response operations should leverage those organizations with relevant risk management equities to ascertain threats and hazards, understand vulnerabilities, and predict lifeline and survivor impacts or needs to enable more expedient response operations.
- Opportunities to lessen the risks of future hazards are an important element to building national resilience.

Recovery. As response activities are underway, recovery operations must begin. Applying the community lifelines construct enables response officials to more effectively identify the requirements and sequence steps in the recovery process, including activities that support the economy, by focusing them on vital areas of community support. This includes providing essential public health and safety services; restoring interrupted utility and other essential services; reestablishing transportation routes and other infrastructure (e.g., agriculture), providing food, water, and shelter for those displaced by an incident; protecting natural and cultural resources and ensuring environmental compliance; ensuring

[19] The critical infrastructure sectors are described in the 2013 National Infrastructure Protection Plan, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/national-infrastructure-protection-plan-2013-508.pdf.

equal access to services in accordance with applicable laws; reunifying children, adults, and household pets who have been separated from their families/guardians; and reopening schools and child care centers.

- Response organizations are responsible for setting the conditions that foster a quick and seamless integration of recovery operations and establish conditions that enable a community's recovery.
- Effective recovery support also depends on successful information sharing between the ESFs and the six Recovery Support Functions (RSF) under the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF).
- Recovery programs—including sheltering and housing, volunteer organization coordination, donations management, small business and agriculture assistance or loans, as well as other disaster assistance—often support response and recovery objectives.

These overlapping areas are identified through comprehensive planning with the whole community to ensure they are properly addressed during the response to an incident. Ensuring that operational plans properly account for the integration of all mission areas is essential.

Operational Coordination

Incident management begins and ends locally, and most incidents are managed or executed at the closest possible geographical, organizational, and jurisdictional levels. Successful incident management often depends on the cooperation of multiple jurisdictions, levels of government, functional agencies, NGOs and emergency responder disciplines, and the private sector, which requires effective coordination across a broad spectrum of activities and organizations. Accordingly, the optimal disaster response follows the model of being locally executed; state, tribal, territorial, or insular area managed; and federally supported with private sector and NGO engagement throughout.

Operational coordination occurs across all of these levels and consists of actions and activities that enable decision makers to determine appropriate courses of action and provide oversight for all types of incidents, including complex homeland security operations, to achieve unity of effort and effective outcomes.

Private Sector Engagement

Public sector government resources alone cannot provide all the solutions when responding to incidents. Acting within regulatory and authoritative guidelines, government entities and the private sector can provide mutually beneficial incident-specific response support. When government, private sector, and NGO resources are mutually supportive and aligned, there is a much better chance of meeting communities' incident and economic recovery needs. All elements of the community should be activated, engaged, and integrated to respond to a major or catastrophic incident. This all-inclusive approach helps expand and expedite the availability of resources, capabilities, and solution sets for incident response. When severe incidents disrupt community lifelines, private sector and NGO capabilities can assist with stabilizing lifelines and restoring services. Similar to public sector mutual aid and support agreements, it is essential that government and private sector organizations engage in collaboration before an incident to effectively partner during incident response.

Businesses and infrastructure owners and operators have primary responsibility for operating and repairing their systems in emergencies. Businesses and infrastructure owners and operators also have unique expertise and capabilities to conduct restoration operations of their own systems, execute voluntary mutual assistance operations within their sectors, and provide valuable resources for cross-

sector support. When catastrophic incidents put a premium on the restoration of complex supply chains (especially for essential products and services needed for response efforts and stabilizing the economy), private sector coordination and assets are vital for public health and safety, the economy, and national security. The private sector can also help government agencies prioritize support missions (e.g., debris removal) to facilitate business and infrastructure response operations.

In coordination with local governments, private sector organizations have a critical role in re-establishing commercial activities and restoring critical infrastructure operations the community requires following a disruption. The resilience of private sector organizations directly affects community recovery by providing products and services, employment opportunities, other resources and re-establishing a functioning economy. In many cases, private sector organizations also have immediate access to commodities and services that support incident response.

Governmental response organizations should coordinate closely with private sector partners to do the following:

- Assess cross-sector interdependencies and obstacles to meeting survivor needs;
- Identify opportunities to enable or support prompt stabilization of community lifelines;
- Identify where government support is appropriate and available; and
- Identify opportunities to synchronize response operations with private sector efforts to ensure the most effective approach to reach as many survivors as possible.

Private Sector Coordinating Structures

Coordinating structures for the private sector include business emergency operations centers (BEOC), industry trade groups and coordinating councils, information sharing and analysis centers, private sector information and intelligence centers, and other structural entities, such as healthcare coalitions. These organizations, composed of multiple businesses and entities brought together by shared geography or common function (e.g., banking, supply chain management, transportation, venue, and management), support the collaboration, communication, and sharing of information within the private sector. Such organizations can coordinate with and support NGOs and, in many cases, serve as a conduit to government coordinating structures. Strengthening the relationship between private sector and government coordinating structures enhances information sharing and operational response.

Locally Executed Response

During a disaster, those closest to the impacted areas—individuals, families, neighbors, businesses, and emergency responders comprising the community—are the first ones active in response. Local partners know their community's needs, capabilities, and resources best and are positioned to have the most effective impact in the aftermath of an incident. Locally executed response focuses on how the complex network of local, voluntary, and private sector organizations integrate their capabilities to restore damaged infrastructure, restart the flow of products and services, and place essential items into the hands of survivors. Local governments and communities, therefore, provide the true operational coordination for executing an effective response and can draw on the support of additional state and federal resources when their own resources prove insufficient.

Emergency responders at all levels of government use NIMS and ICS command and coordinating structures to manage and support response operations (Figure 3). ICS is a management system designed to integrate on-scene facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications within a common organizational structure. Emergency operations centers (EOC) are facilities where staff

coordinate information and resources to support on-scene incident management. Staff in EOCs at all levels of government may also encourage participation by the private sector, including NGOs, academia, associations, and access and functional needs community organizations. Staff in EOCs at all levels of government may also encourage participation by private sector elements including NGOs, academia, associations, and organizations representing those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

At the local level, coordinating structures are usually composed of entities within specific functional areas, such as public works, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and fire departments. On-scene integration among these structures may occur at incident command posts (ICP) and more frequently at one or more local EOCs.

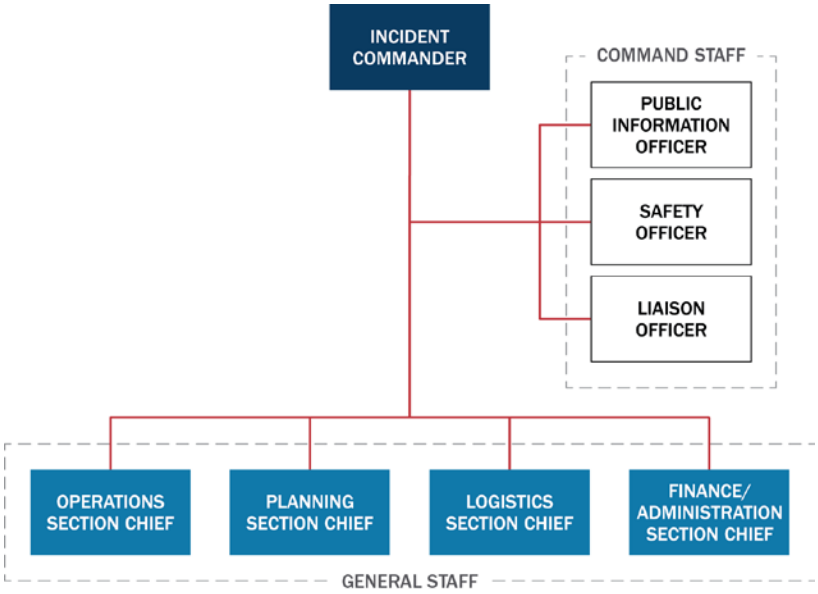


Figure 3: Example of an ICS organization with a Single Incident Commander[20]

Incident management may also involve Multiagency Coordination Groups (MAC Groups). A MAC Group is composed of senior officials, such as agency administrators, executives, or their designees, who are authorized to represent or commit agency resources and funds in support of incident activities. A MAC Group acts as an executive- or policy-level body during incidents, supporting resource prioritization and allocation, and enabling decision making among elected and appointed officials and those responsible for managing the incident (i.e., the incident commander). In some communities and jurisdictions, MAC Groups are located at or near EOCs in order to authorize additional resources, approve emergency authorities, and provide guidance on issues.

Local Coordinating Structures

Local jurisdictions and states employ a variety of coordinating structures to help identify risks, establish relationships, and organize and build capabilities. Due to the unique partnerships, geographic conditions, threats, and capabilities, the coordinating structures vary. Examples of local response

[20] For more information on NIMS and ICS, see https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1508151197225-ced8c60378c3936adb92c1a3ee6f6564/FINAL_NIMS_2017.pdf.

coordinating structures include local planning committees, healthcare coalitions,[21] Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), and chapters of national-level associations. These local and regional coordinating structures organize and integrate their capabilities and resources with neighboring jurisdictions, the state, the private sector, and NGOs.

State, Tribal, Territorial, and Insular Area Managed Response

State governments serve as agents for local jurisdictions by managing the delivery of federal disaster assistance to meet local requirements. While the local incident command structure directs on-scene incident management activities and maintains command and control of on-scene incident operations, state EOCs are activated as necessary to support local EOCs and to help ensure that responders have the resources they need to conduct response activities. This is achieved through integration of state-level coordinating structures working with local coordinating structures or the local incident command structure.

State, tribal, territorial, and insular area EOCs also provide a common location for coordination of state/tribal/territorial/insular area—and in some cases, federal—support to local EOCs and/or incident personnel. Most states, tribal organizations, territories, and insular areas maintain an EOC to manage incidents requiring state-level assistance. Some of these governments have additional EOCs for coordinating information and resources within a region or area.

Many states involve their tribal counterparts within the EOC to ensure that tribal coordinating structures are integrated into the delivery of capabilities and tribal needs are addressed.

State, Territorial, and Insular Area Coordinating Structures

States, territories, and insular areas also leverage the capabilities and resources of partners across the state/territory/insular area when identifying needs and building capabilities. The coordinating structures at the state, territorial, or insular area level also vary, depending on factors such as geography, population, industry, and the capabilities of the local jurisdictions. These structures are also designed to leverage appropriate representatives from across the whole community, some of whom may also participate in local or regional coordinating structures. Many states, territories, and insular areas create independent committees or councils focused on specific areas or functions as a sub-set of their emergency management agency.

Tribal Managed Response

The United States has a trust responsibility with federally recognized Indian tribes and recognizes their right to self-government. This trust doctrine requires the Federal Government to protect tribal treaty rights, lands, assets, and resources while providing support through statutory authority and other programs. Under the Stafford Act, federally recognized Indian tribes may directly request their own emergency and major declaration or they may request assistance under a state request. In addition, federally recognized Indian tribes can request federal assistance for incidents that impact the tribe but do not result in a Stafford Act declaration. Given their unique position, tribal governments often have planning and response requirements that are the equivalent of state and local operational coordination during an incident.

[21] Healthcare coalitions are multi-agency coordination groups that integrate member organizations with the jurisdictional agency(s) in the geographic area in which they operate. Healthcare coalitions are invaluable as public-private partnerships integrating healthcare facilities with emergency medical services, public health, and emergency management.

Tribal Coordinating Structures

Tribal coordinating structures vary depending on a variety of factors, such as individual tribal capabilities, population size, and economic circumstances. Tribes may have internal coordinating structures and facilities for incident response, as well as others that include bordering states and neighboring jurisdictions.

The Tribal Assistance Coordination Group (TAC-G) is a MAC Group that assists federally recognized tribes during emergencies and disasters and provides information and technical assistance for tribal emergency management programs in coordination with federal partners. The TAC-G is led and managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Emergency Management Program. The TAC-G consists of partners from all levels of government (local, state, tribal, territorial, insular, or federal), as well as nonprofit aid organizations and the private sector.

Federally Supported Response

Federal support during response operations focuses on the capabilities necessary to save lives; protect property and the environment; meet basic human needs; prioritize operations to stabilize community lifelines and restore basic services and community functionality; establish a safe, secure, and accessible environment for responders and response operations; and support the transition to recovery. The desired end-state for federal incident response is achieved when local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area entities no longer require Federal Government assistance to provide life-saving or life-sustaining support, thereby allowing for the transition to recovery.

When an incident occurs that exceeds or is anticipated to exceed local, state, tribal, territorial, or insular area resources or when an incident is managed by federal departments or agencies acting under their own authorities, the Federal Government may use the management structures described within the NRF. Additionally, the Federal Government may use supplementary or complementary plans to involve all necessary department and agency resources to organize the federal response and ensure coordination among all response partners.

Different federal departments and agencies may play significant roles in response activities, depending on the nature and size of an incident. Many of the arrangements by which departments and agencies participate are defined in the ESF annexes coordinated through pre-scripted mission assignments in a Stafford Act response, formalized in interagency agreements, or described in supplementary plans.

The following sections describe federal support operations at the incident, regional, and headquarters levels.

Federal Incident-level Operations

To help deliver federal support or response at the incident level, coordinating structures are aligned to incident-level structures.

Unified Coordination

Unified coordination is the term used to describe the primary state/tribal/territorial/insular area/federal incident management activities conducted at the incident level. Unified coordination is typically directed from a Joint Field Office (JFO), a temporary federal facility that provides a central location for coordination of response efforts by the private sector, NGOs, and all levels of government. Unified coordination is organized, staffed, and managed in a manner consistent with NIMS principles using an ICS structure. The Unified Coordination Group (UCG) is composed of senior leaders representing state, tribal, territorial, insular area and federal interests and, in certain circumstances, local

jurisdictions, the private sector, and NGOs. UCG members must have significant jurisdictional responsibility and authority. The composition of the UCG varies from incident to incident, depending on the scope and nature of the disaster. The UCG leads the unified coordination staff. Personnel from state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and federal departments and agencies; other jurisdictional entities; the private sector; and NGOs may be assigned to the unified coordination staff at various incident facilities (e.g., JFOs, staging areas, and other field offices). The UCG determines staffing of the unified coordination staff based on incident requirements.

Although unified coordination is based on the ICS structure, it does not manage on-scene operations. Instead, unified coordination supports on-scene response efforts and conducts broader support operations that may extend beyond the incident site. Unified coordination must include robust operations, planning, public information, and logistics capabilities that integrate local, state, and federal—as well as tribal, territorial, and insular area governments—personnel, when appropriate, so that all levels of government work together to achieve unity of effort.

When incidents affect multiple localities and states or the entire Nation, multiple UCGs with associated unified coordination staff may be established. In these situations, coordination occurs according to the principles of area command, as described in NIMS.

As the primary field entity for federal response, unified coordination integrates diverse federal authorities and capabilities and coordinates federal response and recovery operations. Figure 4 shows a unified coordination organization that might be assembled to deal with a major incident—such as a terrorist attack—that includes a law enforcement dimension. Federal agencies that conduct on-scene, tactical-level activities may also establish incident and area command structures, generally in conjunction with their counterpart local, state, tribal, territorial and/or insular area government agencies, to manage that work.

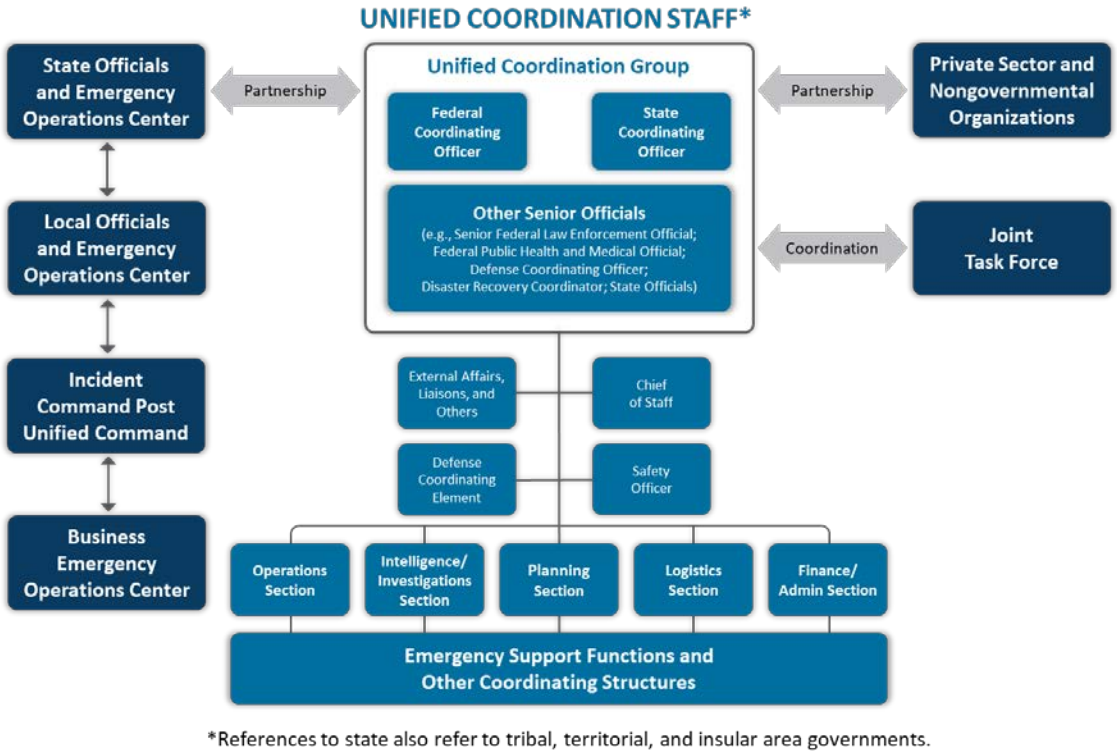


Figure 4: Unified Coordination

Emergency Support Functions as a Coordinating Structure

ESFs are the primary, but not exclusive, response coordinating structures at the federal level. Communities, states, regions, and other tribal, territorial, insular area, and federal departments and agencies may use the ESF construct, or they may employ other coordinating structures or partners appropriate to their location, threats, or authorities. Whatever structures are used, they are encouraged to work closely with federal ESFs at the incident, regional, or headquarters levels if they are activated.

The Federal Government and many state governments organize their response resources and capabilities under the ESF construct. Each ESF is composed of a department or agency that has been designated as the ESF coordinator, along with a number of primary and support agencies. Primary agencies are designated on the basis of their authorities, resources, and capabilities. Support agencies are assigned based on resources or capabilities in a given functional area. To the extent possible, resources provided by the ESFs are identified consistently with NIMS resource typing categories.

ESFs have proven to be an effective way to organize and manage resources to deliver core capabilities. The federal ESFs are the primary, but not exclusive, federal coordinating structures for building, sustaining, and delivering the response core capabilities.

At the federal level, ESFs are groups of organizations that work together to deliver core capabilities to stabilize community lifelines in support of an effective response. Any ESF may assist in the delivery of a response core capability. Because a core capability may be required, each ESF can contribute to the stabilization of any of the community lifelines, depending on the circumstances of the incident. Table 3 provides an example of actions each ESF may take to support incident issues arising within the health and medical lifeline; these actions may impact more than one of the other community lifelines.

Table 3: Example Actions That an ESF May Take in Support of Stabilizing the Health and Medical Lifeline During Incident Response Operations

ESF	Example Supporting Actions or Capabilities
ESF #1 Transportation	Coordinate the opening of roads and manage aviation airspace for access to health and medical facilities or services.
ESF #2 Communications	Provide and enable contingency communications required at health and medical facilities.
ESF #3 Public Works & Engineering	Install generators and provide other temporary emergency power sources for health and medical facilities.
ESF #4 Firefighting	Coordinates federal firefighting activities and supports resource requests for public health and medical facilities and teams.
ESF #5 Information & Planning	Develop coordinated interagency crisis action plans addressing health and medical issues.
ESF #6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, & Human Assistance	Integrate voluntary agency and other partner support, including other federal agencies and the private sector, to resource health and medical services and supplies.
ESF #7 Logistics	Provide logistics support for moving meals, water, or other commodities.
ESF #8 Public Health & Medical Services	Provide health and medical support to communities, and coordinate across capabilities of partner agencies.
ESF #9 Search & Rescue	Conduct initial health and medical needs assessments.

ESF	Example Supporting Actions or Capabilities
ESF #10 Oil & Hazardous Materials Response	Monitor air quality near health and medical facilities in close proximity to the incident area.
ESF #11 Agriculture & Natural Resources	Coordinate with health and medical entities to address incidents of zoonotic disease.
ESF #12 Energy	Coordinate power restoration efforts for health and medical facilities or power-dependent medical populations.
ESF #13 Public Safety & Security	Provide public safety needed security at health and medical facilities or mobile teams delivering services.
ESF #14 Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure	Be informed of and assess cascading impacts of health or medical infrastructure or service disruptions, and deconflict or prioritize cross-sector requirements.
ESF #15 External Affairs	Conduct public messaging on the status of available health and medical services or public health risks.

Additional detail on the scope of each ESF can be found in the *Emergency Support Function Roles and Responsibilities* section.

As previously noted, many local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area jurisdictions have adopted and tailored the ESF construct. Because these jurisdictions established ESFs based on their specific risks and requirements, there is no mandatory or direct linkage to the federal ESFs. Governments are encouraged to engage members of the whole community as part of whatever coordinating processes they use.

Departments and agencies supporting federal ESFs may be selectively activated by FEMA or as requested by a lead federal agency to support response activities for incidents. Not all incidents requiring federal support result in the activation of ESFs.

When departments and agencies supporting federal ESFs are activated, they may assign staff at headquarters, regional, and incident levels. Through the Stafford Act and in accordance with 6 U.S.C. Sections 741(4) and 753(c), FEMA may issue mission assignments to obtain resources and services from federal departments and agencies.

Incidents Without a Stafford Act Declaration

Most incidents where the NRF serves as the foundational federal response doctrine will not result in a federally declared disaster under the Stafford Act. For example, pre-incident operations for hurricanes, responses to biological incidents, electric grid emergencies, oil spills, migration crises, public health emergencies, and a host of other threats and hazards may not receive a Presidential disaster declaration but still require a coordinated national response.

For such non-Stafford Act incidents where the Federal Government is involved, the President may designate or the federal agencies involved may agree to recognize an agency to serve as the Lead Federal Agency (LFA) for the response. The LFA typically activates the response structures appropriate to its authorities. The LFA employs NIMS and this Framework to coordinate the federal response. Details regarding federal operations for non-Stafford incidents are contained within the relevant statutes and policies. Because the NRF is always in effect, ESFs may be activated and deployed to help manage any response in support of the LFA.

Federal Regional Operational Support

Coordinating structures can be assembled and organized at the regional level to address incidents that cross state or international borders or have broad geographic or system-wide implications or to manage competing requirements for response assets among multiple incidents.

Federal Regional Facilities

Most federal departments and agencies have regional or field offices that may participate with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments in planning for incidents and provide response assets when an incident occurs in their jurisdiction. Some federal departments and agencies share the same standard federal regional structure as FEMA. In larger-scale incidents, these regional and field offices may provide the initial response assets with additional support being provided from other department and agency offices across the Nation. Some federal regional and field offices have their own EOCs to support deployments of their assets.

- **FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC).** FEMA has 10 regional offices, each headed by a Regional Administrator. Each of FEMA's regional offices maintains an RRCC. When activated, RRCCs are multi-agency coordination centers generally staffed by regional FEMA personnel and augmented by ESFs and other federal agencies in anticipation of or immediately following an incident. Operating under the direction of the FEMA Regional Administrator, the staff within the RRCCs coordinates federal regional response efforts and maintains connectivity with FEMA Headquarters and with state EOCs, state and major urban area fusion centers, Federal Executive Boards, tribal governments, and other federal, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area operations and coordination centers that potentially contribute to the development of situational awareness. The UCG assumes responsibility for coordinating federal response activities at the incident level once unified coordination is established, freeing the RRCC to deal with new incidents should they occur.
- **Joint Operations Center (JOC**). In response to significant threats within the criminal jurisdiction of the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) may establish a JOC, which is a regional multi-jurisdictional, interagency operations center to lead and coordinate the operational law enforcement response, including but not limited to investigative operations and related intelligence activities. The JOC is led by an FBI on-scene commander (OSC) and is supported by a command group and a consequence management group, as appropriate. If the threat involves potential attacks or threats spanning multiple geographic areas, then multiple JOCs may be established. The JOC acts as the focal point for the strategic management and direction of on scene law enforcement activities and coordination with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities. Additionally, the FBI OSC may be supported by the Domestic Emergency Support Team (if deployed), which may provide interagency technical or scientific expertise.

Federal Headquarters Operational Support

Coordinating structures are assembled and organized at the federal headquarters level, particularly to address incidents that cross regional borders or have broad geographic or system-wide implications.

Federal Operations Centers

Most Cabinet-level and some other federal departments and agencies have headquarters-level operations centers. A wide range of such centers maintain situational awareness within their functional

areas and provide relevant information to the DHS National Operations Center (NOC)[22] during an incident. These operations centers may also coordinate ESF activities, communicate with other federal operations centers, and communicate with their local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area government counterparts. Examples of FOCs include the following:

- **National Operations Center.** In the event of an act of terrorism, natural disaster, or other emergency, the NOC, as the principal operations center for DHS, coordinates and integrates information from the NOC components to provide situational awareness and a common operating picture for the entire Federal Government, as well as for local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, as appropriate, to ensure that accurate and critical terrorism and disaster-related information reaches government decision makers in a timely manner. Additionally, the NOC serves as the national fusion center, collecting and synthesizing all-source information, including information from state and major urban area fusion centers, for all threats and hazards across the entire integrated National Preparedness System.
- **National Response Coordination Center.** When activated, the NRCC is a multiagency coordination center located at FEMA Headquarters. NRCC's staff coordinates the overall federal support for major disasters and emergencies, including catastrophic incidents and emergency management program implementation. FEMA maintains the NRCC as a functional component of the NOC for incident support operations.

  The National Business Emergency Operations Center is a FEMA component within the NRCC that acts as mechanism for information sharing between public and private sector stakeholders. The NRCC also includes the public affairs function of ESF #15, which acts as a mechanism to synchronize external messaging among all impacted and responding organizations.

- **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Integrated Operations Coordination Center (CIOCC).** The CIOCC is composed of the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, the National Infrastructure Coordinating Center, and the National Coordinating Center for Communications. It is the focal point for federal partners, the private sector, and local, state, tribal, and territorial governments to obtain situational awareness, technical assistance, and integrated, actionable information to secure and defend the Nation's cyber, physical, and communications infrastructure. The CIOCC operates around the clock to integrate, coordinate, and share risk and threat information with the critical infrastructure community, perform consequence analyses of incidents affecting critical infrastructure, inform decision making, provide technical expertise to address cyber threats and communications outages, and coordinate infrastructure-related support for broader federal response efforts.
- **National Military Command Center (NMCC)**. The Department of Defense's (DoD) NMCC is the Nation's focal point for continuous monitoring and coordination of worldwide military operations. The NMCC directly supports combatant commanders, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President in the command of U.S. Armed Forces in peacetime contingencies and war. The NMCC participates in a wide variety of activities, ranging from missile warning and attack assessment to management of peacetime operations, such as

[22] The NOC is composed of the NOC Watch, Intelligence Watch, FEMA National Watch Center, National Response Coordination Center, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Integrated Operations Coordination Center.

defense support of civil authorities during special events, major disasters, and national emergencies.

- **Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC).** The SIOC acts as the FBI's worldwide EOC. The SIOC maintains situational awareness of criminal or terrorist threats and critical incidents and crises (foreign and domestic, regardless of cause or origin) and provides FBI headquarters executives, domestic field offices, and overseas legal attachés with timely notification and the dissemination of strategic information. The SIOC shares information and intelligence with other EOCs at all levels of government. Maintaining a constant state of readiness to support any crisis or major event, the SIOC provides a secure venue to support crisis management, special event monitoring, and significant operations. The SIOC provides command, control, communications connectivity, and a common operating picture for managing FBI operational responses and assets throughout the world on behalf of FBI Headquarters, divisions, field offices, and legal attachés. In the event of a crisis, the SIOC establishes the headquarters command post and develops connectivity to field command posts and JOCs. The FBI-led Weapons of Mass Destruction Strategic Group is activated within the SIOC when facing weapons of mass destruction terrorist threats. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Strategic Group is an interagency crisis action team that supports information exchange and the deconfliction of counterterrorism activities.

The specific structures activated for a given incident depend on the levels of government involved, as well as the legal authorities under which the response is being conducted.

National Security Council

The National Security Council (NSC) is the principal policy body for consideration of national security policy issues requiring Presidential determination. The NSC advises and assists the President in integrating all aspects of national security policy as it affects the United States—domestic, foreign, military, intelligence, and economic (in conjunction with the National Economic Council).

Roles and Responsibilities for Response

This section describes those roles and responsibilities and sharpens the focus on identifying who is involved with the response mission area. This section also addresses what the various partners must do to deliver the response core capabilities and to integrate successfully with the prevention, protection, mitigation, and recovery mission areas.

An effective, unified national response requires layered, mutually supporting capabilities. Individuals and communities, the private sector, NGOs, and all levels of government (local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and federal) should each understand their respective roles and responsibilities and how to complement each other in achieving shared goals. All elements of the whole community play roles in developing the core capabilities needed to respond to incidents. This includes developing plans that ensure continuity of operations, conducting assessments and exercises, providing and directing resources and capabilities, and gathering lessons-learned. These activities require that all partners understand how they fit within and are supported by the structures described in the NRF.

Emergency management staff in all jurisdictions and organizations have a fundamental responsibility to consider the needs of the whole community. These needs must be incorporated into response planning and delivery of the core capabilities. The potential contributions of all individuals toward delivering core capabilities during incident response (e.g., through associations and alliances that serve the people previously identified) should be incorporated into planning efforts.

Emergency management staff must also consider those who own or have responsibility for animals, both as members of the community who may be affected by incidents and as a potential means of supporting response efforts. This includes those with household pets, service and assistance animals, working dogs, and agricultural animals/livestock, as well as those who have responsibility for wildlife, exotic animals, zoo animals, research animals, and animals housed in shelters, rescue organizations, breeding facilities, and sanctuaries.

Communities

Communities are groups that share goals, values, and institutions. Communities are not always limited by geographic boundaries or political divisions. Instead, communities may be faith-based organizations; voluntary organizations; neighborhood partnerships; advocacy groups; academia; cultural, social, and community groups; and associations. Communities bring people together in different ways for different reasons, but each community provides opportunities for sharing information and promoting collective action. These communities may have resources and information to stabilize community lifelines. Engaging these groups in preparedness efforts, particularly at the local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area levels, is important to identifying their needs and taking advantage of their potential contributions.

Private Sector

Private sector organizations engage in incident response through their own internal response and continuity actions, the commodities they provide, their partnerships with each level of government, and their roles within the supply chain. Elements of the private sector are most often the providers of community lifeline services and have a key interest in the stabilization and restoration of their own operations and those of other infrastructure systems. Private sector organizations also play a vital role in ensuring communities and survivors have the services and resources necessary to respond to and recover from all types of incidents. The private sector, comprised of small, medium, and large businesses, spans nationally significant infrastructure to locally owned and operated businesses that, while small, are staples of the community. The private sector includes commerce; healthcare; private, cultural, and educational institutions; and industry, as well as public/private partnerships that have been established specifically for emergency management purposes. During an incident, key private sector partners should have a direct link to emergency managers and other relevant officials, such as those from public health, economic development, and community planning agencies and, in some cases, be involved in the decision-making process. Strong integration into response efforts can offer many benefits to the public and private sectors.

As key elements of the national economy, it is important for private sector organizations of all types and sizes to engage in preparedness planning, conduct risk assessments, and identify critical community lifelines, functions, and resources that impact their businesses and communities. Understanding and collaborating on the cross-sector interdependencies and cascading effects of a potentially high-consequence incident on business, infrastructure, and supply chains improves community resilience and can help private sector organizations to quickly resume normal operations. Ultimately, the ability of the private sector to recover is inextricably linked to community recovery.

Owners and operators of certain regulated facilities or hazardous operations may be legally responsible for preparing for and preventing incidents and responding when an incident occurs. For example, the Atomic Energy Act, as amended, and associated regulations require owners and operators of commercial nuclear powerplants and offsite response organizations (OROs) to maintain emergency plans in order protect the health and safety of the public. Onsite response organizations and OROs perform exercises, assessments, notifications, and training for incident response. Because of their

significance in providing essential functions and services, it is vital that private critical infrastructure sectors, such as privately-owned transportation and transit, telecommunications, utilities, financial institutions, hospitals, and other health-related facilities, create and sustain effective business continuity plans.

Private sector entities may serve as partners in local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area emergency preparedness and response organizations and activities and with federal sector-specific agencies. Private sector entities often participate in local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area preparedness activities by providing resources (donated or compensated) during an incident—including specialized teams, essential services, equipment, and advanced technologies—through local public-private emergency plans or mutual aid and assistance agreements or in response to requests from government and nongovernmental initiatives.

Restoring economic activity in an impacted area is fundamental to the recovery of the community. Examples of key private sector activities that support this effort include the following:

- Planning, training, and exercising their response capabilities;
- Planning for, responding to, and recovering from incidents that impact their own infrastructure and facilities;
- Protecting information, and maintaining the continuity of business operations in order to ensure the integrity of supply chains or quickly establishing new supply chains to stabilize the community and reduce human suffering;
- Providing assistance specified under mutual aid and assistance agreements;
- Addressing the welfare of employees (including disbursement of wages);
- Executing their own immediate response activities and meeting the continuity needs of infrastructure, facilities, and business operations;
- Collaborating with emergency management personnel to determine what assistance may be required and how they can provide needed support;
- Contributing to communication and information-sharing efforts during incidents, and providing insight on the scope and scale of impacts;
- Identifying requirements for public sector support to enable stabilization of critical community lifelines; and
- Contributing resources, personnel, and expertise; helping to shape objectives; and receiving information about the status of the community.

Individuals, Families, and Households

Individuals, families, and households reduce potential emergency response requirements and hazards in and around their homes by efforts such as raising utilities above flood level or securing unanchored objects against the threat of high winds. Individuals, families, and households should also prepare emergency supply kits and emergency plans, so they can take care of themselves and their neighbors until assistance arrives. Information on emergency preparedness can be found at many local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, voluntary organization, and federal emergency management Websites, such as http://www.ready.gov.

Individuals can also contribute to the preparedness and resilience of their households and communities by volunteering with emergency organizations (e.g., the local chapter of the American Red Cross,

Medical Reserve Corps, Community Emergency Response Teams, or National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster [National VOAD]) and completing emergency response training courses. Individuals who have access and functional or medical needs should make preparations with family members. Their plans should include provisions for personal assistance service providers and any household pets or service and assistance animals. During an actual disaster, emergency, or threat, individuals, households, and families should monitor emergency communications and follow guidance and instructions provided by local authorities.

Nongovernmental Organizations

NGOs are a distinct category of organizations within the private sector that can support disaster response and recovery. NGOs include voluntary, ethnic, faith-based, veteran-based, disability, and nonprofit organizations that provide sheltering, emergency food supplies, and other essential support services for people, household pets, and service animals. NGOs are inherently independent and committed to specific interests and values. These interests and values drive the groups' operational priorities and shape the resources they provide. NGOs bolster government efforts at all levels and often provide specialized services to the whole community. NGOs are key partners in preparedness activities and response operations.

Examples of NGO contributions include the following:

- Training, management, and coordination of volunteers and donated goods;
- Ensuring staff are screened, trained, and able to safely perform their tasks;
- Identifying sheltering locations, ensuring access to those facilities, and communicating their locations to the whole community;
- Providing emergency commodities and services, such as water, food, shelter, assistance with family reunification, clothing, and supplies for post-emergency cleanup;
- Supporting the evacuation, rescue, care, and sheltering of animals displaced by the incident;
- Supporting search and rescue, transportation, and logistics services and support;
- Identifying and supporting the unmet needs of survivors who have been affected by the disaster;
- Identifying and supporting the heath, medical, mental health, and behavior health resources of the impacted community; and
- Supporting disaster survivors, identifying unmet needs, and developing individual recovery plans.

At the same time, when NGOs support response core capabilities they may also require government assistance. When planning for local community emergency management resources, government organizations should consider the potential need to support NGOs in performing their essential response functions. Volunteers and donors support response efforts in many ways. Governments at all levels must plan ahead to incorporate volunteers and donated resources into response activities. Close collaboration with the voluntary organizations and agencies assists in managing the influx of volunteers and donations. Additional information can be found in the Volunteers and Donations Management Support Annex.

Some NGOs and functions are officially designated as support elements to national response capabilities, such as the following:

- **The American Red Cross.** The American Red Cross is chartered by Congress to provide relief to survivors of disasters and help people prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from

emergencies. The Red Cross has a legal status of a "federal chartered instrumentality" and maintains a special relationship with the Federal Government.[23] In this capacity, the American Red Cross is the co-lead of ESF #6 and supports several other ESFs and the delivery of multiple core capabilities.

- **National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.**[24] National VOAD is an association of organizations that mitigates and alleviates the impact of disasters; provides a forum promoting cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration; and fosters more effective delivery of services to communities impacted by a disaster. National VOAD is a consortium of over 70 national organizations and 56 territorial and state equivalents.
- **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC).** Within the NCMEC, the National Emergency Child Locator Center facilitates the expeditious identification and reunification of children with their families.

Local Government

The responsibility for responding to natural and human-caused incidents that have recognizable geographic boundaries generally begins at the local level with individuals and public officials in the county, parish, city, or town affected by an incident. The following paragraphs describe the responsibilities of specific local officials who have emergency management responsibilities.

Chief Elected or Appointed Official

Jurisdictional chief executives are responsible for the public safety and welfare of the people of their jurisdiction. Officials provide strategic guidance and resources across all five mission areas. Chief elected or appointed officials must have a clear understanding of their emergency management roles and responsibilities and how to apply the response core capabilities because they may need to make decisions regarding resources and operations during an incident to stabilize community lifelines. Lives may depend on their decisions. Elected and appointed officials also routinely shape or modify laws, policies, and budgets to aid preparedness efforts and improve emergency management and response capabilities. The local chief executive's response duties may include the following:

- Obtaining assistance from other governmental agencies,
- Providing direction for response activities, and
- Ensuring appropriate information is provided to the public.

Local Emergency Manager

The jurisdiction's emergency manager oversees the day-to-day emergency management programs and activities. The emergency manager works with chief elected and appointed officials to establish unified objectives regarding the jurisdiction's emergency plans and activities. This role entails coordinating and integrating all elements of the community. The emergency manager coordinates the local emergency management program. This includes assessing the capacity and readiness to deliver the capabilities most likely required to stabilize community lifelines during an incident and identifying and correcting shortfalls. The local emergency manager's duties often include the following:

- Advising elected and appointed officials during a response;

[23] 36 U.S.C. Chapter 3001: The American Red Cross.
[24] Additional information is available at https://www.nvoad.org/.

- Conducting response operations in accordance with the NIMS.
- Coordinating the functions of local agencies;
- Coordinating the development of plans, and working cooperatively with other local agencies, community organizations, private sector businesses, and NGOs;
- Developing and maintaining mutual aid and assistance agreements;
- Coordinating resource requests during an incident through the management of an emergency operations center;
- Coordinating damage assessments during an incident;
- Advising and informing local officials and the public about emergency management activities during an incident to facilitate response operations such as sheltering, avoiding, evacuating, and resupply of food and water;
- Developing and executing accessible public awareness and education programs;
- Conducting exercises to rehearse response activities; test personnel, plans and systems; and identify areas for improvement;
- Coordinating integration of individuals with disabilities, individuals from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, and others with access and functional needs into emergency planning and response; and
- Helping to ensure the continuation of essential services and functions through the development and implementation of continuity of operations plans.

Other Local Departments and Agencies

Local government department and agency heads collaborate with the emergency manager during the development of local emergency plans and provide key response resources. Participation in the planning process helps to ensure that specific capabilities are integrated into a workable plan to safeguard the community. The department and agency heads and their staffs develop, plan, and train on internal policies and procedures to meet response needs safely, and they participate in interagency training and exercises to develop and maintain necessary capabilities.

> Similar to the federal and state level, local emergency management agencies are not the only entities involved in incident response. Local departments, agencies, and offices, such as those for emergency medical services, economic development, public health, law enforcement, fire, public works, land use planning, building construction, and animal control, as well as other administrative elements of local government, have a significant role to play and provide valuable perspective, depending on the incident.

State, Tribal, Territorial, and Insular Area Government

State, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments are responsible for the health and welfare of their residents, communities, lands, and cultural heritage.

States

State governments supplement local efforts before, during, and after incidents by applying in-state resources first. When an incident expands or has the potential to expand beyond the capability of a

local jurisdiction and responders cannot meet the needs with mutual aid and assistance resources, local officials contact the state.

Upon receiving a request for assistance from a local or tribal government, state officials may do the following:

- Coordinate warnings and public information through the activation of the state's public communications strategy;
- Distribute supplies stockpiled to meet the needs of the emergency;
- Provide technical assistance and support to meet the response and recovery needs;
- Suspend or waive statutes, rules, ordinances, and orders, to the extent permitted by law, to ensure timely performance of response functions;
- Implement state volunteer and donations management plans, and coordinate with the private sector and voluntary organizations;
- Order or recommend evacuations ensuring the integration and inclusion of the requirements of populations such as children; individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs; those from religious, racial, and ethnically diverse communities; people with limited English proficiency; and owners of animals, including household pets and service and assistance animals; and
- Mobilize resources to meet the requirements of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs in compliance with federal civil rights laws.

If additional resources are required, states can request assistance from other states through interstate mutual aid and assistance agreements such as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Administered by the National Emergency Management Association, EMAC is an interstate mutual aid agreement that streamlines the interstate mutual aid and assistance process. If a state anticipates that its resources may be exceeded, the governor[25] may request assistance from the Federal Government through a Stafford Act declaration.

The following paragraphs describe some of the roles and responsibilities of key officials, as well as other departments and agencies.

Governor

The public safety and welfare of a state's residents are the fundamental responsibilities of every governor. The governor coordinates state resources and provides the strategic guidance for response to all types of incidents. This includes supporting local governments, as needed, and coordinating assistance with other states and the Federal Government. A governor also does the following during response:

- In accordance with state law, may make, amend, or suspend certain orders or regulations associated with response efforts;
- Communicates to the public in an accessible manner (i.e., effective communications to address all members of the whole community), and helps people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of and protective actions for any type of incident;
- Coordinates with tribal governments within the state; and

[25] "Governor" is used throughout this document to refer to the chief executive of states, territories, and insular areas.

- Commands the state military forces (National Guard personnel not in federal service and state defense forces).

State Homeland Security Adviser

Many states have designated homeland security advisers who serve as counsel to the governor on homeland security issues and may serve as a liaison between the governor's office, the state homeland security structure, and other organizations inside and outside of the state. The advisor may chair a committee composed of representatives of relevant state agencies, including public safety, the National Guard, emergency management, public health, environment, agriculture, and others charged with developing prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery strategies.

State Emergency Management Agency Director

All states have laws mandating the establishment of a state emergency management agency, as well as the emergency plans coordinated by that agency. The director of the state emergency management agency is responsible for ensuring that the state is prepared to deal with large-scale emergencies and coordinating the statewide response to such incidents. This includes supporting local and tribal governments, as needed; coordinating assistance with other states and the Federal Government; and, in some cases, with NGOs and private sector organizations. The state emergency management agency may dispatch personnel to assist in the response and recovery effort.

National Guard

The National Guard is an important state resource available for planning, preparing, and responding to natural or human-caused incidents.[26] National Guard members have expertise in critical areas, such as emergency medical response; communications; logistics; search and rescue; civil engineering; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear response and planning; and decontamination.

The governor may order members of the National Guard to state active-duty status to support state functions and activities. The governor or the state adjutant general may assign members of the National Guard to assist with state, regional, and federal emergency management plans. In American Samoa, the governor coordinates response activities with the U.S. Army Reserve because it is the sole U.S. territory with no National Guard.

Other State Departments and Agencies

State department and agency heads and their staffs develop, plan, and train on internal policies and procedures to meet response and recovery needs. As discussed earlier, these departments and agencies represent the full range of authorities and resources of the state government, such as law enforcement, transportation, housing, economic development, public works, health, social services, and agriculture. State department and agency heads also provide important links to regional voluntary organizations, business, and industry. Staff from these departments and agencies also participate in interagency training and exercises to develop and maintain the necessary capabilities and share resources through mutual aid agreements. State department and agency heads are vital to the state's overall emergency management program because they bring expertise spanning various response functions and serve as core members of the state EOC and ICP. Many state department and agency heads have direct

[26] The President may order National Guard forces to active duty (e.g., sections 12302 or 12304 of title 10, U.S.C.), call National Guard forces into Federal service (e.g., the Insurrection Act), or request National Guard force support of DoD operations or missions (e.g., section 502(f) of title 32 U.S.C.) in the United States. When ordered to active duty or called into Federal service, National Guard forces operate under the command of the Secretary of Defense.

experience in providing accessible and vital services to the whole community during response operations. State departments and agencies typically work in close coordination with their federal counterpart agencies during joint state and federal responses, and under some federal laws, they may request assistance from these federal partners.

Tribes

In accordance with the Stafford Act, the chief executive[27] of an affected Indian tribal government may submit a request for a declaration by the President. Tribal governments are responsible for coordinating resources to address actual or potential incidents. When coordinating with tribes, language and cultural differences must be considered, as well as overlapping authorities.

Tribes are encouraged to build relationships with local jurisdictions and states because these entities may have resources most readily available. The NRF's Tribal Coordination Support Annex outlines processes and mechanisms that tribal governments may use to request federal assistance during an incident.

Chief Executive

The chief executive is responsible for the public safety and welfare of his/her respective tribe. The chief executive coordinates tribal resources and helps guide the response to all types of incidents. This includes coordinating assistance with states, as well as the Federal Government. The chief executive does the following during response:

- In accordance with the law, may make, amend, or suspend certain orders or regulations associated with the response;
- Communicates with the public in an accessible manner, and helps people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of all types of incidents;
- Negotiates mutual aid and assistance agreements with other local jurisdictions, states, tribes, territories, and insular area governments; and
- Can request federal assistance.

Territorial and Insular Area Governments

Territorial and insular area governments are responsible for coordinating resources to address actual or potential incidents and have many of the same functions states have, as previously listed in this section. Because of their remote locations, territorial and insular area governments often face unique challenges in receiving assistance from outside the jurisdiction quickly and often request assistance from neighboring islands, other nearby countries, states, the private sector or NGO resources, or the Federal Government. Additionally, there are language and cultural differences that must be considered, as well as the potential for authorities that overlap with federal authorities.

Territorial/Insular Area Leader

The territorial/insular area leader is responsible for the public safety and welfare of the people of his/her jurisdiction. As authorized by the territorial or insular area government, the leader does the following:

- Coordinates resources needed to respond to incidents of all types;

[27] The Stafford Act uses the term "chief executive" to refer to the person who is the chief, chairman, governor, president, or similar executive official of an Indian tribal government.

- In accordance with the law, may make, amend, or suspend certain orders or regulations associated with the response;
- Communicates with the public in an accessible manner, and helps people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of all types of incidents;
- Commands the territory's military forces;
- Negotiates mutual aid and assistance agreements with other local jurisdictions, states, tribes, territories, and insular area governments; and
- Can request federal assistance.

Federal Government

The Federal Government maintains a wide range of capabilities and resources that may be required to deal with domestic incidents in order to save lives and protect property and the environment while ensuring the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties and supporting the stabilization of community lifelines. To be successful, any approach to the delivery of response capabilities will require an all-of-nation approach. All federal departments and agencies must cooperate with one another and with local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, community members, voluntary organizations, and the private sector to the maximum extent possible.

The Federal Government becomes involved with a response when federal interests are involved; when local, state, tribal, territorial, or insular resources are insufficient and federal assistance is requested; or as authorized or required by statute, regulation, or policy. Accordingly, in some instances, the Federal Government may play a supporting role to local, state, tribal, territorial, or insular area authorities by providing federal assistance to the affected parties. For example, the Federal Government provides assistance to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area authorities when the President declares a major disaster or emergency under the Stafford Act. In other instances, the Federal Government may play a leading role in the response where the Federal Government has primary jurisdiction or when incidents occur on federal property (e.g., national parks and military bases).

Regardless of the type of incident, the President leads the Federal Government response effort to ensure that the necessary resources are applied quickly and efficiently to large-scale and catastrophic incidents. Different federal departments or agencies lead coordination of the Federal Government's response, depending on the type and magnitude of the incident, and are also supported by other agencies that bring their relevant capabilities to bear in responding to the incident.

Secretary of Homeland Security

In conjunction with these efforts, the statutory mission of DHS is to act as a focal point regarding natural and human-caused crises and emergency planning. Pursuant to the Homeland Security Act and Presidential directive, the Secretary of Homeland Security is the principal federal official for domestic incident management. The Secretary of Homeland Security coordinates preparedness activities within the United States to respond to and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. The Secretary of Homeland Security coordinates with federal entities to provide for federal unity of efforts for domestic incident management. As part of these responsibilities, the Secretary of Homeland Security does the following during response:

- Provides the executive branch with an overall architecture for domestic incident management, and coordinates the federal response, as required; and

- Monitors activities, assesses risk, and activates specific response mechanisms to support other federal departments and agencies without assuming the overall coordination of the federal response during incidents that do not require the Secretary of Homeland Security to coordinate the response or do not result in a Stafford Act declaration.

Other federal departments and agencies carry out their response authorities and responsibilities within this overarching construct of DHS coordination.

Unity of effort differs from unity of command. Various federal departments and agencies may have statutory responsibilities and lead roles based on the unique circumstances of the incident. Unity of effort provides coordination through cooperation and common interests and does not interfere with federal departments' and agencies' supervisory, command, or statutory authorities. The Secretary of Homeland Security does the following during response:

- Ensures that overall federal actions are unified, complete, and synchronized to prevent unfilled gaps in the Federal Government's overarching effort. This coordinated approach ensures that the federal actions undertaken by DHS and other departments and agencies are harmonized and mutually supportive.
- Executes these coordination responsibilities, in part, by engaging directly with the President and relevant Cabinet, department, agency, and DHS component heads, as is necessary, to ensure a focused, efficient, and unified federal preparedness posture. All federal departments and agencies, in turn, cooperate with the Secretary of Homeland Security in executing domestic incident management duties.

The Secretary of Homeland Security's responsibilities also include management of the broad emergency management and response authorities of FEMA and other DHS components. DHS component heads may have lead response roles or other significant roles, depending on the type and severity of the incident. For example, the U.S. Secret Service is the lead agency for security design, planning, and implementation of national special security events, while the Assistant Director for Cybersecurity for DHS's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) coordinates the response to significant cyber incidents.

FEMA Administrator

The FEMA Administrator is the principal adviser to the President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the National Security Council regarding emergency management. The FEMA Administrator's duties include the following:

- Assisting the President, through the Secretary of Homeland Security, in carrying out the Stafford Act, operation of the NRCC and RRCCs, the effective support of all ESFs, and, more generally, preparation for, protection against, response to, and recovery from all types of incidents.
- Reporting to the Secretary of Homeland Security, the FEMA Administrator is also responsible for managing the core DHS grant programs supporting homeland security activities.[28]

Attorney General

The Attorney General has lead responsibility for criminal investigations of terrorist acts or terrorist threats by individuals or groups inside the United States or directed at U.S. citizens or institutions abroad, where such acts are within the federal criminal jurisdiction of the United States. The Attorney

[28] See the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, enacted as part of the Fiscal Year 2007 DHS Appropriations Act, Public Law 109-295.

General is also responsible for related intelligence collection activities within the United States, subject to the National Security Act of 1947 (as amended) and other applicable laws, Executive Order 12333 (as amended), and Attorney General-approved procedures pursuant to that Executive order.

- Acting through the FBI, the Attorney General, in cooperation with other federal departments and agencies engaged in activities to protect the national security, shall also coordinate the activities of the other members of the law enforcement community to detect, prevent, preempt, and disrupt terrorist attacks against the United States.
- In addition, the Attorney General, generally acting through the FBI Director, has primary responsibility for searching for, finding, and neutralizing weapons of mass destruction within the United States.
- The Attorney General approves requests submitted by state governors, pursuant to the Emergency Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Act, for personnel and other federal law enforcement support during incidents.
- The Attorney General also enforces federal civil rights laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Further information on the Attorney General's role is provided in the National Prevention Framework and Prevention FIOP.

Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of Defense has authority, direction, and control over DoD.[29] DoD resources may be committed when requested by another federal agency and approved by the Secretary of Defense or when directed by the President. Certain DoD officials and DoD component heads, by statute and/or DoD policy, are authorized to approve or delegate the authority to approve certain types of support to civil authorities.[30] DoD policy regarding defense support of civil authorities can be found in DoD Directive 3025.18, Defense Support to Civil Authorities.[31] [32] When DoD resources are authorized to support civil authorities, command of those forces remains with the Secretary of Defense. Under the command and control of the Secretary of Defense, the operational coordination and employment of such resources are normally led by the designated Combatant Command (e.g., U.S. Northern Command, Southern Command, or Indo-Pacific Command). DoD elements in the incident area of operations coordinate closely with response organizations at all levels.

[29] 10 U.S.C. §113.

[30] For example, certain DoD officials may provide an immediate response by temporarily employing the resources under their control, subject to any supplemental direction provided by higher headquarters, to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate great property damage within the United States in response to a request for assistance from a civil authority, under imminently serious conditions and, if time does not permit, obtaining approval from a higher authority. Immediate response authority does not permit actions that would subject civilians to the use of military power that is regulatory, prescriptive, proscriptive, or compulsory (DoD Directive 3025.18). DoD support may also include support provided through mutual or automatic aid agreements, pursuant to Chapter 15A of Title 42 U.S.C. or pursuant to other statutory authorities or agreements.

[31] For example, DoD Instruction 3025.24, "DoD Public Health and Medical Services in Support of Civil Authorities."

[32] For example, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has independent statutory authorities regarding emergency management, such as Section 5 of the Flood Control Act of 1941 (Public Law 84-99) (e.g., providing technical assistance; direct assistance, such as providing sandbags, pumps, and other types of flood fight materials; emergency contracting; and emergency water assistance due to contaminated water source). Also, the Defense Logistics Agency has an interagency agreement with FEMA to provide commodities, including fuel, to civil authorities responding to disasters.

Secretary of State

A domestic incident may have international and diplomatic implications that call for coordination and consultation with foreign governments and international organizations. The Secretary of State is responsible for all communication and coordination between the U.S. Government and other nations regarding the response to a domestic crisis. The Department of State also coordinates international offers of assistance and formally accepts or declines these offers on behalf of the U.S. Government, based on needs conveyed by federal departments and agencies, as stated in the International Coordination Support Annex. Some types of international assistance are pre-identified, and bilateral agreements are already established. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Forest Service and Department of the Interior have joint bilateral agreements with several countries for wildland firefighting support.

Director of National Intelligence

The Director of National Intelligence serves as the head of the intelligence community, acts as the principal advisor to the President for intelligence matters relating to national security, and oversees and directs implementation of the National Intelligence Program. The intelligence community, comprising 17 elements across the Federal Government, functions consistent with laws, Executive orders, regulations, and policies to support the national security-related missions of the U.S. Government. The Director of National Intelligence provides a range of analytic products, including those that assess threats to the homeland and inform planning, capability development, and operational activities of homeland security enterprise partners and stakeholders. In addition to intelligence community elements with specific homeland security missions, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence maintains a number of mission and support centers that provide unique capabilities for homeland security partners.

Emergency Support Function Roles and Responsibilities

ESFs are not solely attributed to any one organization, nor are they mechanisms for executing an agency's statutory authorities. The federal ESFs bring together the capabilities of federal departments and agencies and other national-level assets. Most federal ESFs support a number of the response core capabilities. The core capabilities are delivered to stabilize the community lifelines. Any core capability may be required to help stabilize any community lifeline; therefore, any ESF can contribute toward the stabilization of any community lifeline in coordination with the lead ESF.

Federal ESFs are groups of organizations that work together to deliver core capabilities to stabilize community lifelines in support of an effective response. In addition, there are responsibilities and actions associated with federal ESFs that extend beyond the core capabilities and support other response activities, as well as department and agency responsibilities. While ESFs are primarily a federal coordinating mechanism, states and other organizations or levels of government may adopt the construct, as well.

Federal ESF coordinators oversee the preparedness activities for a particular ESF and coordinate with its primary and support agencies. Responsibilities of the ESF coordinator include the following during response:

- Maintaining contact with ESF primary and support agencies through conference calls, meetings, training activities, and exercises;
- Monitoring the ESF's progress in delivering the core capabilities in an effort to stabilize the incident;
- Coordinating efforts with corresponding private sector, NGO, and federal partners;

- Ensuring the ESF is engaged in appropriate planning and preparedness activities; and
- Sharing information and coordinating across the spectrum of primary and support agencies.

ESF primary agencies have significant authorities, roles, resources, and capabilities for a particular function within an ESF. Primary agencies are responsible for the following:

- Orchestrating support and strategy development within their functional area for the appropriate response core capabilities and other ESF missions;
- Notifying and requesting assistance from support agencies;
- Managing mission assignments (in Stafford Act incidents), and coordinating with support agencies, as well as appropriate state officials, operations centers, and other stakeholders;
- Coordinating resources resulting from mission assignments;
- Working with all types of organizations to maximize the use of all available resources;
- Monitoring progress in delivering core capability and other ESF missions, and providing that information as part of situational and periodic readiness or preparedness assessments;
- Planning for incident management, short-term recovery operations, and transition to long-term recovery support operations;
- Maintaining trained personnel to support interagency emergency response and support teams;
- Identifying new equipment or capabilities required to prevent or respond to new or emerging threats and hazards or to validate and improve capabilities to address changing risks; and
- Promoting physical accessibility, programmatic inclusion, and effective communication for the whole community, including individuals with disabilities.

ESF support agencies have specific capabilities or resources that support primary agencies in executing the mission of the ESF. The activities of support agencies typically include the following:

- Participating in planning for incident management, short-term recovery operations, transition to long-term recovery support operations, and the development of supporting operational plans, standard operating procedures, checklists, or other job aids;
- Providing input to periodic readiness assessments;
- Maintaining trained personnel to support interagency emergency response and support teams;
- Identifying new equipment or capabilities required to respond to new or emerging threats and hazards or to improve the ability to address existing threats; and
- Coordinating resources resulting from response mission assignments.

Table 4 summarizes the federal ESFs and indicates the response core capabilities each ESF most directly supports. All ESFs support the common core capabilities—planning, public information and warning, and operational coordination—and many ESFs support more than those listed.

Table 4: Emergency Support Functions and ESF Coordinators

ESF #1 – Transportation **ESF Coordinator: Department of Transportation**
Coordinates the support of management of transportation systems and infrastructure, the regulation of transportation, management of the Nation's airspace, and ensuring the safety and security of the national transportation system. Functions include but are not limited to the following: ▪ Transportation modes management and control; ▪ Transportation safety; ▪ Stabilization and reestablishment of transportation infrastructure; ▪ Movement restrictions; and ▪ Damage and impact assessment.
ESF #2 – Communications **ESF Coordinator: DHS/ Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency**
Coordinates government and industry efforts for the reestablishment and provision of critical communications infrastructure and services, facilitates the stabilization of systems and applications from malicious activity (e.g., cyber), and coordinates communications support to response efforts (e.g., emergency communication services and emergency alerts and telecommunications). Functions include but are not limited to the following: ▪ Coordination with telecommunications and information technology industries; ▪ Coordination of the reestablishment and provision of critical communications infrastructure; ▪ Protection, reestablishment, and sustainment of national cyber and information technology resources; ▪ Oversight of communications within the federal response structures; and ▪ Facilitation of the stabilization of systems and applications from cyber events.
ESF #3 – Public Works and Engineering **ESF Coordinator: DOD/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**
Coordinates the capabilities and resources to facilitate the delivery of services, technical assistance, engineering expertise, construction management, and other support to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster or an incident. Functions include but are not limited to the following: ▪ Infrastructure protection and emergency repair; ▪ Critical infrastructure reestablishment; ▪ Engineering services and construction management; and ▪ Emergency contracting support for life-saving and life-sustaining services.
ESF #4 – Firefighting **ESF Coordinator: USDA/U.S. Forest Service and DHS/FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration**
Coordinates the support for the detection and suppression of fires. Functions include but are not limited to supporting wildland, rural, and urban firefighting operations.
ESF #5 – Information and Planning **ESF Coordinator: DHS/FEMA**
Supports and facilitates multiagency planning and coordination for operations involving incidents requiring federal coordination. Functions include but are not limited to the following: ▪ Deliberate and crisis action planning; and ▪ Information collection, analysis, visualization and dissemination.

ESF #6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services
ESF Coordinator: DHS/FEMA

Coordinates the delivery of mass care and emergency assistance. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Mass care;
- Emergency assistance;
- Temporary housing; and
- Human services.

ESF #7 – Logistics
ESF Coordinator: General Services Administration and DHS/FEMA

Coordinates comprehensive incident resource planning, management, and sustainment capability to meet the needs of disaster survivors and responders. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Comprehensive national incident logistics planning, management, and sustainment capability; and
- Resource support (e.g., facility space, office equipment and supplies, and contracting services).

ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services
ESF Coordinator: Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Coordinates the mechanisms for assistance in response to an actual or potential public health and medical disaster or incident. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Public health;
- Medical surge support, including patient movement;
- Behavioral health services;
- Mass fatality management; and
- Veterinary, medical, and public health services.

ESF #9 – Search and Rescue
ESF Coordinator: DHS/FEMA

Coordinates the rapid deployment of search and rescue resources to provide specialized life-saving assistance. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Structural collapse (urban) search and rescue;
- Maritime/coastal/waterborne search and rescue; and
- Land search and rescue.

ESF #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response
ESF Coordinator: Environmental Protection Agency

Coordinates support in response to an actual or potential discharge and/or release of oil or hazardous materials. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Environmental assessment of the nature and extent of oil and hazardous materials contamination; and
- Environmental decontamination and cleanup, including buildings/structures and management of contaminated waste.

ESF #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources
ESF Coordinator: Department of Agriculture

Coordinates a variety of functions designed to protect the Nation's food supply, respond to pest and disease incidents impacting agriculture, and protect natural and cultural resources. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Nutrition assistance;
- Agricultural disease and pest response;
- Technical expertise, coordination, and support of animal and agricultural emergency management;
- Meat, poultry, and processed egg products safety and defense; and
- Natural and cultural resources and historic properties protection.

ESF #12 – Energy
ESF Coordinator: Department of Energy

Facilitates the reestablishment of damaged energy systems and components, and provides technical expertise during an incident involving radiological/nuclear materials. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Energy infrastructure assessment, repair, and reestablishment;
- Energy industry utilities coordination; and
- Energy forecast.

ESF #13 – Public Safety and Security
ESF Coordinator: Department of Justice/Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives

Coordinates the integration of public safety and security capabilities and resources to support the full range of incident management activities. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Facility and resource security;
- Security planning and technical resource assistance;
- Public safety and security support; and
- Support to access, traffic, and crowd control.

ESF #14 – Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure
ESF Coordinator: DHS/Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Coordinates cross-sector operations with infrastructure owners and operators, businesses, and their government partners, with particular focus on actions taken by businesses and infrastructure owners and operators in one sector to assist other sectors to better prevent or mitigate cascading failures between them. Focuses particularly on those sectors not currently aligned to other ESFs (e.g., the Financial Services Sector). Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Assessment, analysis, and situational awareness of cross-sector challenges; and
- Facilitates operational coordination with critical infrastructure sectors.

ESF #15 – External Affairs
ESF Coordinator: DHS

Coordinates the release of accurate, coordinated, timely, and accessible public information to affected audiences, including the government, media, NGOs, and the private sector. Works closely with state and local officials to ensure outreach to the whole community. Functions include but are not limited to the following:

- Public affairs and the Joint Information Center;
- Intergovernmental (local, state, tribal, territorial, nongovernmental, and private sector) affairs; and
- Congressional affairs.

The Emergency Support Function Leadership Group (ESFLG) is composed of federal departments and agencies designated as coordinators for ESFs or coordinating agencies for other NRF annexes. The ESFLG provides a forum for departments and agencies with roles in federal incident response to jointly address matters pertaining to the community lifelines, emergency response policy, preparedness, operations, and training. The ESFLG promotes federal unity of effort through the exchange of information and coordinated decision making during disaster response. FEMA leads the ESFLG and is responsible for coordinating steady-state and operational activities.

Other Federal Department and Agency Heads

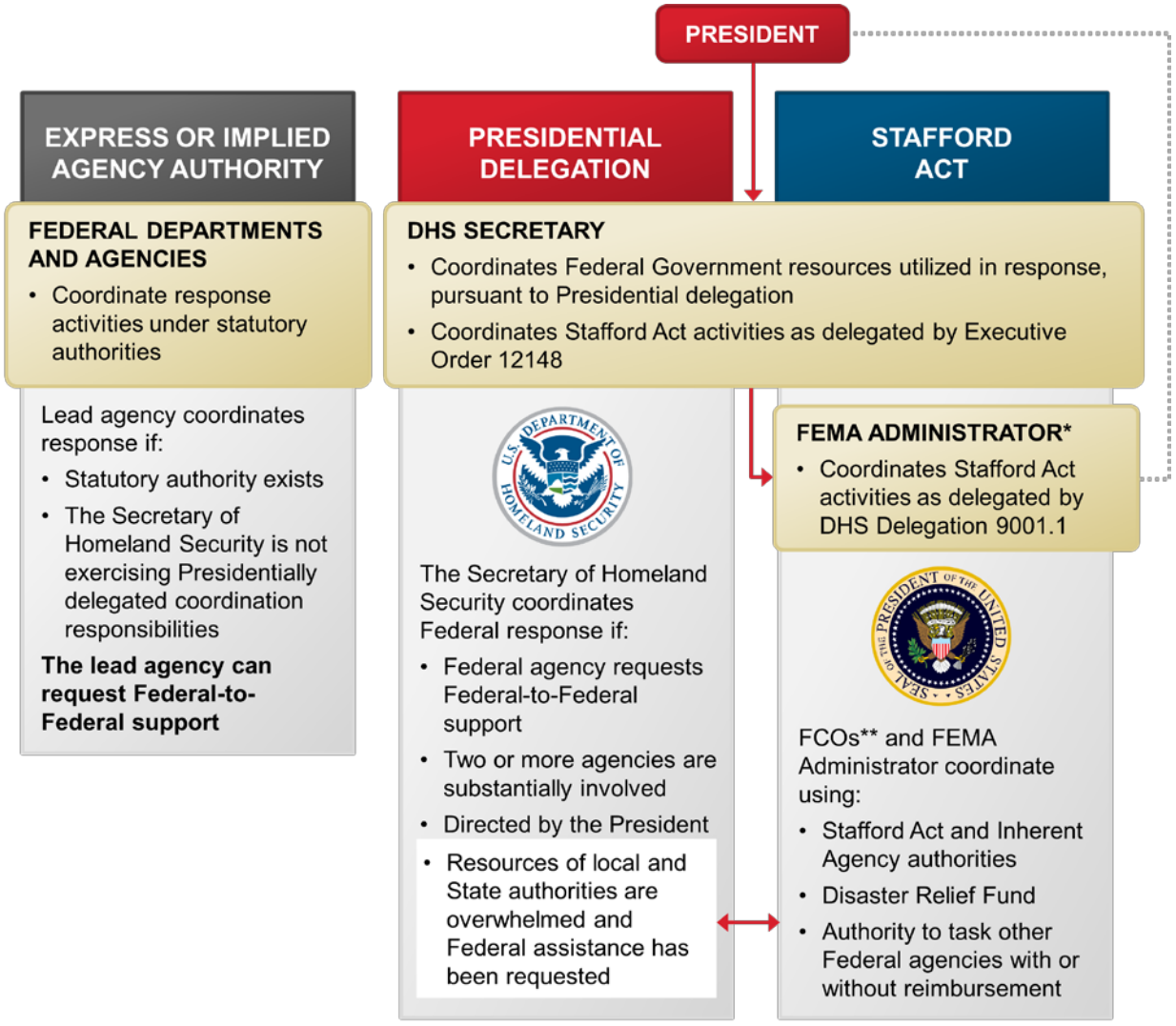
The heads of all federal departments and agencies provide their full and prompt cooperation, resources, and support, as appropriate and consistent with their own responsibilities, for protecting the national security. Various federal departments or agencies play primary, coordinating, or support roles in delivering response core capabilities. In some circumstances, other federal agencies may have a lead or support role in coordinating operations or elements of operations, consistent with applicable legal authorities. Nothing in the NRF precludes a federal department or agency from executing its existing authorities. For all incidents, federal department and agency heads serve as advisors for the executive branch relative to their areas of responsibility.

Federal departments and agencies designated as coordinating and cooperating agencies in NRF support annexes conduct a variety of activities, to include managing specific functions and missions and providing federal support within their functional areas.

Federal Authorities

Federal assistance can be provided to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area jurisdictions, as well as to other federal departments and agencies, through several different mechanisms and authorities. Federal financial assistance may also be available for disability-related access and functional needs equipment.

Different federal departments or agencies lead coordination of the Federal Government's response actions, depending on their express and implied statutory authorities and based on the type and magnitude of the incident. Federal departments or agencies are supported by other agencies who bring relevant capabilities that support those affected by the incident. Figure 5 shows the authorities for coordination of federal response support described in the following sections.



* The FEMA Administrator has additional standing authority for response under the Homeland Security Act and Title VI of the Stafford Act. Per the Homeland Security Act, the FEMA Administrator serves as the principal advisor to the President, Homeland Security Council, and Secretary of Homeland Security.

** The Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) is appointed under Section 302 of the Stafford Act.

Figure 5: Incident Management and Response Authorities for the Federal Government

Federal Response and Assistance Under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act

The Federal Government may provide assistance in the form of funding, resources, and services. Federal departments and agencies respect the sovereignty and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, while rendering assistance that supports the affected local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular governments.

Local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments do not require federal assistance to respond to most incidents; however, when an incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, the governor or chief executive of a tribe can request federal assistance under the Stafford Act. In certain circumstances, the President may declare an emergency without a request from a governor when the primary responsibility for response rests with the United States because the emergency involves a subject area for which, under the Constitution or laws of the United States, the United States exercises exclusive or preeminent responsibility and authority.

The Stafford Act authorizes the President to provide financial and other assistance to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments; certain private nonprofit organizations; and individuals to support response, recovery, and mitigation efforts following a Stafford Act emergency or major disaster declaration.[33] Most forms of Stafford Act assistance require a cost share. While federal assistance under the Stafford Act may only be delivered after a declaration, FEMA may pre-deploy federal assets when a declaration is likely and imminent. The Stafford Act provides for two types of declarations:

- An **emergency declaration** is more limited in scope than a major disaster declaration, involves fewer federal programs, and is not normally associated with recovery programs. However, the President may issue an emergency declaration prior to an actual incident to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe. Generally, federal assistance and funding are provided to meet specific emergency needs or to help prevent a catastrophe from occurring.
- A **major disaster declaration** provides more federal programs for response and recovery than an emergency declaration. Unlike an emergency declaration, a major disaster declaration may only be issued after an incident.

Federal Departments and Agencies Acting Under Their Own Authorities

Immediate life-saving assistance to states, tribes, territories, and insular areas, as well as other types of assistance, such as wildland firefighting support or response to an agricultural disease or significant cyber incident, are performed by federal departments or agencies under their own authorities and funding or through reciprocal mutual assistance agreements. Some federal departments or agencies have authorities to declare specific types of disasters or emergencies and conduct or lead federal response actions using funding sources other than the Disaster Relief Fund. For example, specific trust funds are established under federal environmental laws to support and fund oil and hazardous substances response operations. Similarly, federal land management agencies are required at all times to respond to incidents of all magnitudes that occur on or impact federal lands managed by those agencies, while federal departments and agencies acting under the trust doctrine can provide financial and programmatic support to tribes, when requested.

When the Secretary of Homeland Security is not coordinating the overall response, federal departments and agencies may coordinate federal operations under their own statutory authorities or as designated by the President and may activate response structures applicable to those authorities. The head of the department or agency may also request the Secretary of Homeland Security to activate NRF structures and elements (e.g. Incident Management Assistance Teams and National Operation Center elements) to provide additional assistance, while still retaining leadership for the response.

[33] These authorities may be exercised independently of, concurrently with, or become part of a federal response coordinated by the Secretary of Homeland Security pursuant to Presidential directive.

Federal departments and agencies carry out their response authorities and responsibilities within the NRF's overarching construct or under supplementary or complementary operational plans. Table 5 provides examples of scenarios in which specific federal departments and agencies have the responsibility for coordinating response activities. This is not an all-inclusive list; incident annexes contained in FIOPs provide greater operational detail for these and other incidents.

Table 5: Examples of Other Federal Department and Agency Authorities[34]

Scenario	Department/Agency	Authorities
Agricultural and Food Incident	USDA	The Secretary of Agriculture has the authority to declare an **extraordinary emergency** and take action because of the presence of a pest or disease of livestock that threatens livestock in the United States. (7 U.S.C. § 8306 [2007]). The Secretary of Agriculture also has the authority to declare an **extraordinary emergency** and take action because of the presence of a plant pest or noxious weed whose presence threatens plants or plant products of the United States. (7 U.S.C. § 7715 [2007]).
Public Health and Medical Incident[35]	Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services has the authority to take actions to protect the public health and welfare, declare a **public health emergency**, and to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies (Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 201 et seq.). The Public Health Service Act (PHSA), as amended by the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act, Public Law No. 113-5, forms the foundation of HHS legal authority for responding to public health emergencies (Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 201 et seq.). The Project BioShield Act amended the PHSA to provide flexible authorities to expedite and enhance research, development, procurement, and stockpiling of medical countermeasures for a biological incident (Public Law 108-276 (as amended at 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3; 42 U.S.C. §§ 247d-6a, 247d-6b).
Oil and Hazardous Materials Spills	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	The EPA and USCG have the authority to take actions to respond to oil discharges and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants, including leading the response. (42 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq., 33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.). The EPA Administrator and Commandant of the USCG[36] may also classify an oil discharge as a **spill of national significance** and designate senior officials to participate in the response. (40 CFR Part 300.323).[37]
Cyber Incident	FBI, Office of the	The FBI has the designation of federal lead agency for

[34] These and other department or agency authorities may be exercised independently of, concurrently with, or become part of a federal response coordinated by the Secretary of Homeland Security pursuant to Presidential directive. Other department and agency authorities for specific incidents can be found in the FIOP's incident annexes.
[35] A declaration of a public health emergency may make available any funds appropriated to the Public Health Emergency Fund.
[36] The Commandant of the USCG coordinates the designation of a spill of national significance with the Secretary of Homeland Security, as appropriate.
[37] See ESF #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response Annex for more information on these authorities.

Scenario	Department/Agency	Authorities
	Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), and DHS/CISA	**threat response activities** (PPD-41). Threat response activities include the law enforcement and national security investigation of a cyber incident, including collecting evidence, linking related incidents, gathering intelligence, identifying opportunities for threat pursuit and disruption, and providing attribution. ODNI, through the Cyber Threat intelligence Integration Center, is the lead federal agency for intelligence support and related activities. DHS has the responsibility for **asset response activities**, such as providing technical assets and assistance to mitigate vulnerabilities and reducing the impact of the incident, identifying and assessing the risk posed to other entities and mitigating those risks, and providing guidance on how to leverage federal resources and capabilities (PPD-41). The Cyber UCG will also include relevant sector-specific agencies if a cyber incident affects or is likely to affect the sectors they represent. FEMA maintains the responsibility for coordinating **consequence management** for physical impacts to the population.

When a federal department or agency has responsibility for directing or managing a major aspect of a response coordinated by the Secretary of Homeland Security, that organization is part of the national leadership for the incident and is represented in field, regional, and headquarters unified command and coordination organizations.

Federal-to-Federal Support

Federal departments and agencies may execute interagency or intra-agency reimbursable agreements in accordance with the Economy Act or other applicable authorities. The Financial Management Support Annex to the NRF contains information about this process. A federal department or agency responding to an incident under its own authorities may also request support from the Secretary of Homeland Security in obtaining and coordinating additional federal assistance. The Secretary of Homeland Security may activate one or more ESFs to provide the requested support.

International Support

FEMA, the Department of State, and other Federal agencies use the International Assistance Systems Concept of Operations to manage the acceptance or request of international resources following a Stafford Act declaration. The Federal Government may execute a process to "pull" resources from international partners where the assistance meets known requirements identified by the local, state, tribal, territorial, insular or Federal officials in the disaster area based on a request from an authorized Federal response agency for resources that are urgently needed but not available in the United States. The Federal Government may operate a "push" process when accepting the assistance that addresses Federal Government diplomatic interests even when foreign assistance has not been requested. The Federal Government only accepts commodities that can enter the country without significant regulatory agency oversight or inspection and that can readily be used. FEMA coordinates through the ESFs and with regulatory agencies to ensure assets are appropriate to be applied to the disaster and meet statutory or regulatory requirements.

Federal Response and Assistance Available Without a Stafford Act Declaration

The NRF covers the full range of complex and constantly changing requirements in anticipation of or in response to threats or actual incidents. In addition to Stafford Act support, the NRF or other supplementary or complementary operational plans may be applied to respond or provide other forms of support. During a non-Stafford Act response:

- The President may designate, and departments and agencies may recommend through the interagency policy process, an LFA to manage the incident.
- When an LFA is designated, the LFA appoints a senior response official to carry out its responsibilities employing the NRF, NDRF, and NIMS. The senior response official is the Federal Government's senior representative fully dedicated to the response, demonstrates national-level leadership in a time of crisis, and acts as the face and voice of the Federal response when interacting with other senior Federal, state, tribal, territorial, or insular, private sector, nongovernmental, and elected officials as well as the media and the public.
- When directed by the President or requested by an agency head, FEMA's incident management capabilities may be used on a reimbursable basis under the Economy Act to support an LFA in carrying out the aforementioned responsibilities. FEMA may adjust the scale of its support to ensure execution of its statutory responsibilities.

Operational Planning

Operational planning is conducted across the whole community, including the private sector, NGOs, and all levels of government. Operational planning is guided by objectives and priorities identified in related strategic plans and an understanding of the risks that affect an organization or jurisdiction. The NRF fosters unity of effort for emergency operations planning by providing common doctrine and purpose, which integrates both the National Preparedness System and the National Planning System.

Planning is fundamental to national preparedness. Plans are a continuous, evolving instrument of anticipated actions that maximize opportunities and guide response operations. Because planning is an ongoing process, a plan is a product based on information and understanding at the moment and is subject to revision.

The National Planning System provides a unified approach and common terminology for deliberate and incident action planning. Deliberate planning involves developing strategic, operational, and tactical plans to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from a jurisdiction's threats or hazards. Incident action planning, sometimes referred to as crisis action planning, occurs in a time-constrained environment to develop or rapidly adapt operational and tactical plans in response to an imminent or ongoing incident.[38]

Deliberate plans provide the starting point for incident response and recovery and provide much of the required information for incident action planning, which is then adapted to meet operational conditions. The planning process includes a feedback loop for continual refinement of deliberate and incident plans to more effectively address incident priorities and objectives. Incident plans are continually refined

[38] National Planning System, 2016, pages 4 and 5.

throughout an incident, based on emerging operational conditions. Incident plans can also support the modification and improvement of deliberate plans through after-action and lessons-learned processes.

Response to emergencies and disasters will be most effective when communities conduct risk- and capability-based planning. Support provided by the National Risk Management Center and tools such as the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, Stakeholder Preparedness Review, and Core Capability Development Sheets help communities to set risk-based capability targets, evaluate capability gaps, and develop strategies to build and sustain discrete capabilities. These activities inform resource investment and allocation, drive deliberate planning efforts focused on the most challenging risks, and help government and private sector officials understand response and recovery capacities and identify where mutual aid or other assistance may fill capability gaps.

The National Planning System and Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101 provide further information on the various types of plans and guidance on the fundamentals of planning.

Federal Planning

Federal planning is integrated to align, link, and synchronize response actions to enable federal departments and agencies and other national-level partners to provide the right resources at the right time to support local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area government response operations. Integrated planning provides answers for which traditional and nontraditional partners can deliver capabilities that stabilize community lifelines and ultimately support the recovery of the community.

The NRF is based on the concept of tiered response with an understanding that most incidents start at the local or tribal level, and as needs exceed resources and capabilities, additional local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, or federal assets may be required. The FIOP for response and recovery, therefore, is intended to align with other local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area government, and federal plans to ensure that all response partners share a common operational focus. Similarly, integration occurs at the federal level among the departments, agencies, and nongovernmental partners that compose the respective mission area through the frameworks, FIOPs, and departmental and agency operations plans.

Figure 6 provides an overview of how federal deliberate planning efforts are aligned under the National Preparedness System and are mutually supportive in their development, coordination, and use. Similarly, complementary and mutually supportive plans may be developed by organizations through incident action planning.

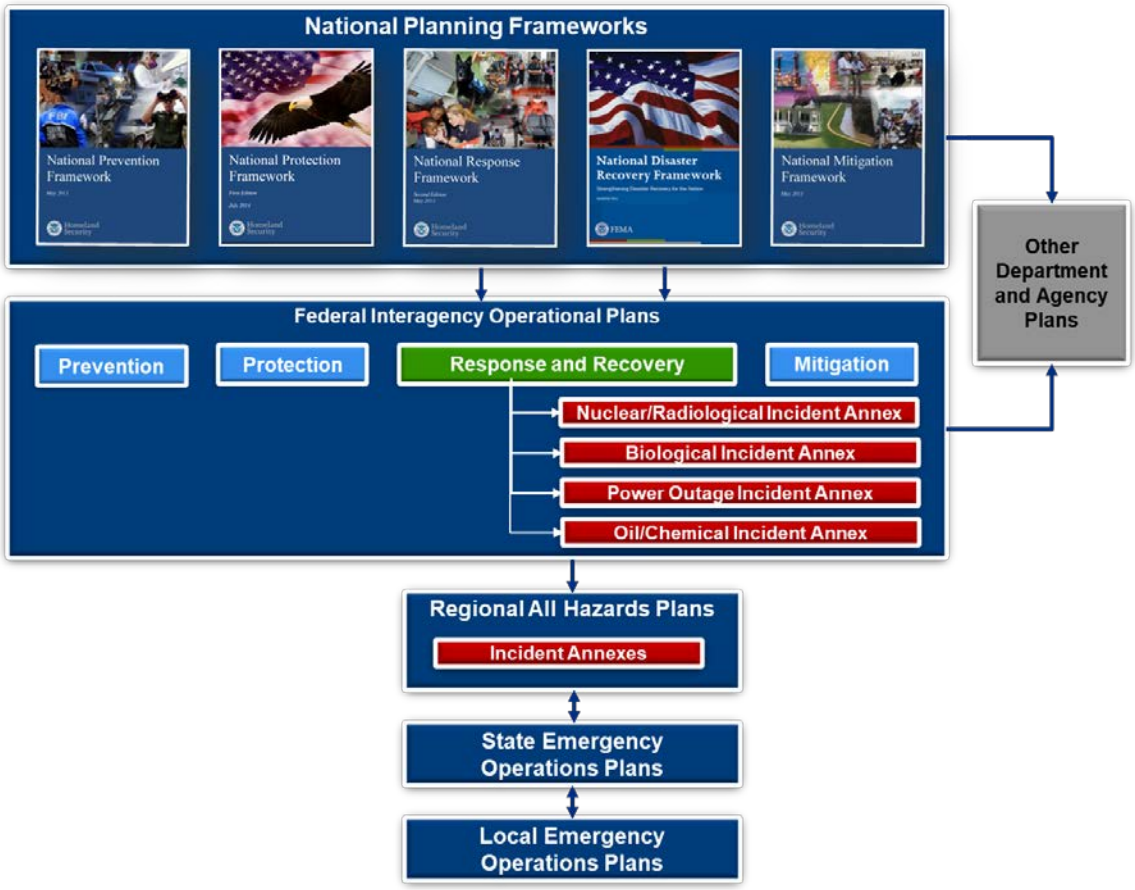


Figure 6: Alignment of Planning Efforts with PPD 8 – National Preparedness

Application for Planning

Implementation of the concepts within the NRF and related FIOP are mandatory for federal departments and agencies. While the NRF does not direct the actions of other response elements, the guidance contained in the NRF and the FIOP is intended to inform local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments, as well as NGOs and the private sector, regarding how the Federal Government responds to incidents. These partners can use this information to inform their planning and ensure that assumptions regarding federal assistance and response and the manner in which federal support will be provided are accurate.

At the federal level, the NRF is supported by the FIOP. Incident annexes to the FIOP address unique concepts of operations or capabilities for risks not otherwise addressed by the FIOP. The concepts in the NRF and NIMS guide federal operational response planning and the FIOP, which provides further information regarding roles and responsibilities and identifies the critical tasks, resourcing, and sourcing requirements. The NRF does not contain detailed descriptions of specific department or agency functions because such information is located in department- or agency-level operational plans. Federal department and agency plans should, at a minimum, address the execution of their roles and responsibilities in support of the NRF and FIOP to deliver the core capabilities.

Continuity Considerations

National preparedness and sustainment of essential functions are a shared responsibility of the whole community. Continuity considerations should be incorporated into the planning process. Continuity is not strictly a governmental responsibility, nor is it limited to a specific critical infrastructure sector. Effective continuity planning helps to ensure the uninterrupted ability to engage partners; to respond appropriately with scaled, flexible, and adaptable operational capabilities; to specify succession to office and delegations of authority to protect the unity of effort and command; and to account for the availability of responders, regardless of the threat or hazard.[39]

Ensuring the continuity of community lifeline operations is a critical part of responding to a disaster. Continuity planning and operations increase the likelihood of uninterrupted coordination across jurisdictions, levels of government, and the private sector, particularly during catastrophic incidents. For example, effective response operations require the operability, interoperability, and continuity of communications. The National Emergency Communications Plan provides the whole community with a strategic plan that establishes a shared vision for and coordinates the complex mission of maintaining and improving emergency communications capabilities.

Continuity considerations, including community lifeline interdependencies, should be built into all plans and guidance and supported by leadership at all levels. Without the implementation of continuity principles, private sector organizations and governments at all levels may be unable to provide services and sustainment of community lifelines when needed the most.

Supporting Resources

To assist NRF users, FEMA maintains electronic versions of the current NRF documents—the base document, ESF annexes, and support annexes—as well as other supporting materials. FEMA also provides information, training materials, and other tools, such as an overview of the main Stafford Act provisions, a guide to authorities and references, and an abbreviations list to assist response partners in understanding and executing their roles under the NRF. Materials are regularly evaluated, updated, and augmented, as necessary. Additional content may be added or modified at the request of response mission area partners and other users.

Maintenance

The NRF is a living document, and it will be regularly reviewed to evaluate consistency with existing and new policies, evolving conditions, and the experience gained from its use. Reviews will be conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the NRF on a quadrennial basis.

DHS will coordinate and oversee the review and maintenance process for the NRF. The revision process includes developing or updating documents necessary to carry out capabilities. Significant updates to the NRF will be vetted through a federal senior-level interagency review process. The NRF will be reviewed in order to accomplish the following:

- Assess and update information on the core capabilities in support of response goals and objectives;
- Ensure that the NRF adequately reflects the organization of responsible entities;
- Ensure that the NRF is consistent with the other four mission areas;
- Update processes based on changes in the national threat/hazard environment;

[39] For more information on continuity considerations, see https://www.fema.gov/continuity-guidance-circular-cgc.

- Incorporate lessons-learned and effective practices from day-to-day operations, exercises, and actual incidents and alerts; and
- Reflect progress in the Nation's response mission activities the need to execute new laws, Executive orders, and Presidential directives, as well as strategic changes to national priorities and guidance, critical tasks, or national capabilities.

In reviewing the implementation of the NRF, FEMA will consider effective practices and lessons-learned from exercises and operations, as well as pertinent new processes and technologies. Effective practices include continuity planning, which ensures that the capabilities contained in the NRF can continue to be executed, regardless of the threat or hazard. Pertinent new processes and technologies should enable the Nation to adapt efficiently to the evolving risk environment and use data relating to location, context, and interdependencies that allow for effective integration across all missions using a standards-based approach. Updates to the NRF annexes may occur independently from reviews of the base document.

Conclusion

In implementing the NRF to build national preparedness and resilience, partners are encouraged to develop a shared understanding of broad-level strategic implications as they make critical decisions in building future capacity and capability. The whole community should be engaged in examining and implementing the strategy and doctrine contained in the NRF, considering current and future requirements in the process.

The whole community remains firm in its commitment to safeguard itself against its greatest risks, now and in the future. Through whole community engagement, the Nation will continue to improve its preparedness to face all emergencies or disaster challenges that may unfold.