

Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan Basic Plan

FOREWORD

“The Governor may adopt and implement the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan which provides for state-level emergency operations in response to any type of disaster or large-scale emergency affecting Virginia and provides the framework within which more detailed emergency plans and procedures can be developed and maintained by state agencies, local governments and other organizations.” Code of Virginia §44-146.17.

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management maintains the *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)* and presents the plan to the Governor for adoption at least once every four years. The Governor issued Executive Order 60 in December 2007 to adopt the current published full version of the COVEOP. In March 2008, the *National Response Framework (NRF)* was adopted by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security. The December 2007 version of the COVEOP incorporated requirements from the Draft NRF. The Commonwealth has revised the COVEOP to align with the final version of the *NRF*. The COVEOP Basic Plan, all appendices, Emergency Support Functions and support annexes have been modified to reflect the changes required by the NRF as well as changes required by updated storm data and results from training exercises and real world emergency events. This 2009 version of the COVEOP, Basic Plan developed by the Department of Emergency Management with concurrence from the state agencies and organizations with primary and support roles in the Virginia Emergency Response Team, continues to align with the National Incident Management System.

In addition, in January 2007, the Governor issued Executive Order 44 establishing preparedness initiatives in state government, and directing all executive branch agencies to include preparedness planning, including continuity of operations planning, in their core missions and strategic plans. This COVEOP complies with and further implements that order.

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PREFACE

Virginia is vulnerable to a variety of hazards such as flooding, hurricanes, winter storms, hazardous materials incidents, acts of terrorism and resource shortages. A planned and coordinated response on the part of state and local officials in support of responders in the field can save lives, protect property, and more quickly restore essential services.

The Code of Virginia, § 44-146.13 to 44-146.29:2, establishes legal authority for development and maintenance of the Commonwealth's emergency management program and organization, and defines the emergency powers, authorities, and responsibilities of the Governor and the State Coordinator. Moreover, the *Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws* require that state and local governments develop and maintain current emergency operations plans (EOPs) in order to be prepared for a variety of natural and man-made hazards such as flash flooding, major river flooding, hurricanes, hazardous materials incidents, resource shortages and acts of terrorism. Executive orders by the Governor supplement the laws and establish specific plans and initiatives.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

The strategies and objectives of the Emergency Management Program for the Commonwealth are established in several plans including:

- ❖ Secure Commonwealth Initiative Strategic Plan 2005 is a multi-year plan that sets the overall course and direction of Commonwealth Preparedness, including the emergency management program, by defining its vision, mission, goals, and objectives.
- ❖ Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP), maintained by VDEM, including all annexes and appendices, is an all-discipline, all-hazards plan that establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of statewide incidents.
 - Hazard-specific operational plans, known as incident annexes, address hazards to which the Commonwealth is at high risk, either in frequency or impact. They include plans for emergencies related to nuclear power generation plants, hurricane-risk localities near the coast and the Chesapeake Bay, the potential for public health threats like pandemic influenza, large-scale hazardous-materials incidents, and terrorism incidents anywhere in the Commonwealth.
- ❖ *COV Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan* identifies hazards and analyzes the potential impacts. The plan focuses on prevention and reduction of the impacts of hazards establishing interim and long-term goals and objectives, strategies, programs and actions to avoid long-term vulnerability to the hazards.
- ❖ Other hazard specific plans, developed by individual agencies to address specific incidents or pursuant to federal guidance, include a *State Floodplain Management Plan*, a *Drought Assessment and Response Plan*, and plans to address specific biological hazards such as pandemic flu and animal-borne diseases.
- ❖ Agency strategic plans focus on prioritized actions including the functions of each agency which are critical to the emergency response and recovery operations of the Commonwealth.

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- ❖ Agency continuity of operations (COOP) plans address an agency's ability to continue its essential functions in the event of a disruption. Plans include vital equipment, orders of succession and lines of authority. They also address the procedures for protecting, maintaining and restoring their essential functions, including those that are critical to emergency response and recovery operations.

The Commonwealth of Virginia Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resiliency Strategic Plan, maintained by the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness, supports the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) by establishing a coordinated approach to national priorities, goals, and requirements for critical infrastructure and key resources protection. The strategic plan requires the development of Sector Specific Plans (SSPs) to provide the means by which the NIPP is implemented across all critical infrastructure and key resources sectors.

COMPONENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

The Basic Plan, using an all-hazards approach to incident management, describes the concepts and structures of response and recovery operation; identifies agencies with essential (primary) and support emergency management functions; and defines emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery duties and responsibilities of local governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGO) and private partners. There are eight appendices to the Basic Plan including the Governor's executive order from Dec 2007 that promulgated the entire *COVEOP* and the Record of Changes for updates made between promulgation years and approved by the Governor's office.

The Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) provide the structure for state interagency emergency operations in support of disaster-affected localities. ESF annexes describe the roles and responsibilities for state departments and agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The plan identifies seventeen (17) emergency support functions; assigns primary, support, and cooperating agencies and organizations for each function; and explains in general terms how the Commonwealth will organize and implement those functions. ESF #5, Emergency Management, is the lead ESF in any operation involving the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) organization. ESF #5 has the responsibility for command and control for any activation or augmentation within the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and overall coordination of all state assets and resources.

Support Annexes address those functions that are applicable to every type of incident and that provide support for all ESFs. They describe the framework through which state departments and agencies, volunteer organizations and nongovernmental organizations coordinate and execute the common functional processes and administrative requirements necessary to ensure efficient and effective incident management.

Incident Annexes address contingency or hazard situations requiring specialized response and recovery procedures. They describe policies, situations, concepts of operations and responsibilities pertinent to incidents such as hurricanes, acts of terrorism or nuclear/radiological emergencies.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)* provides the structure and mechanisms for the coordination of state support to impacted local governments and affected individuals and businesses. It is compatible with the National Response Framework and provides the structure for coordinating with the federal government in the delivery of federal disaster assistance. The COVEOP assists in the Commonwealth Preparedness mission by improving our capability to respond to and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

A. Purpose

The Basic Plan of the COVEOP is an overview of the state's emergency response and recovery organization and policies. It provides for state-level emergency operations in response to any type of disaster or large-scale emergency affecting Virginia. It assigns duties and responsibilities to departments, agencies, and organizations for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. It also provides the framework within which more detailed emergency plans and procedures can be developed and maintained by both state agencies and local governments.

To ensure the state's capability to implement this plan, each agency tasked with essential emergency management responsibilities, as identified in the Basic Plan, ESF, Support or Incident Annexes, shall develop a continuity of operations (COOP) plan that identifies the critical and time-sensitive missions, applications, processes, and functions to be recovered and continued in an emergency or disaster, including alternate operating capabilities. Agency functions critical to the state emergency response and recovery operations shall have priority for protection and restoration.

B. Scope and Applicability

The COVEOP covers the full range of complex and constantly changing requirements in anticipation of or in response to threats or acts of terrorism, major disasters, and other emergencies within or affecting the Commonwealth.

The COVEOP establishes interagency and multi-jurisdictional mechanisms for state agency involvement in domestic incident management operations. These mechanisms include coordinating structures and processes for incidents requiring:

- ❖ Local-to-local support through Statewide Mutual Aid;
- ❖ State support to local governments;
- ❖ State-to-state support through Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) agreements or other appropriate instruments; and
- ❖ Public and private-sector incident management integration.

This plan is applicable to all agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia that might be requested to provide assistance or conduct operations in the context of actual or potential incidents in which the governor may declare or determine that state emergency management coordination is required in order to save lives, minimize damage, or otherwise assist a region, locality, community, or nongovernmental entity in response to a disaster. Moreover, this plan

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also provides the foundation for the organization and coordination of community recovery and mitigation activities.

C. Authorities

The plan is authorized in the Code of Virginia (§44-146.17(1)). When activated by the Governor's executive order declaring a "state of emergency," this plan has the force and effect of law. As indicated in the *Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws*, there are statutory authorities, regulatory rules, Opinions of the Attorney General and policies that provide the basis for Commonwealth actions and activities in the context of domestic incident management. Disaster-specific executive orders may also address individual elements of the plan. In order to request a declaration of emergency or major disaster, and to cooperate with the federal disaster assistance provided for disasters that are declared, the Governor must verify that the plan has been implemented. The plan uses the guidelines established by the *National Response Framework* to provide an all-hazards approach to disaster management. Although nothing in the *National Response Framework* alters the existing authorities of individual state departments or agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the common framework facilitates inter-governmental coordination when both plans are implemented for an incident occurring in Virginia.

The COVEOP establishes the coordinating structures, processes, and protocols required to integrate the specific statutory and policy authorities of various state departments and agencies in a collective framework for action to include mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Appendix C provides key statutes, executive orders, directives, and guidance documents that provide additional authority and policy direction relevant to incident management.

D. Key Concepts of the COVEOP

1. Systematic and coordinated incident management including protocols for:
 - ❖ Incident reporting;
 - ❖ Coordinated action;
 - ❖ Alert and notification;
 - ❖ Mobilization of state resources to augment existing local capabilities;
 - ❖ Operating under differing threats or threat levels; and
 - ❖ Integration of crisis and consequence management functions.
2. Proactive notification and deployment of state resources in anticipation of or in response to major events in coordination and collaboration with local, private and federal entities when possible.
3. Redundancy of resources built into all functions of emergency operations including the command, planning, operations, logistics, and administrative units. Developed plans include clear succession of authority, procedures for duplication of critical systems and protocols for utilizing alternate operational facilities.
4. Organization of interagency efforts to minimize damage, restore impacted areas to pre-incident conditions if feasible, and/or implement programs to mitigate vulnerability to future events.

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5. Coordination of incident communication, worker safety and health, private-sector involvement, and other activities that are common to the majority of incidents (see Support Annexes).
6. Organization of Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to facilitate the delivery of critical resources, assets, and assistance. State departments and agencies are assigned to lead or support the ESFs based on authorities, resources, and capabilities.
7. Mechanisms for vertical and horizontal coordination, communications, and information-sharing in response to threats or incidents. These mechanisms facilitate coordination among state agencies and local governments, and with the federal government, as well as between the public and private sectors.
8. Development of detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), tactical, and hazard-specific contingency plans and procedures.
9. Coordination of interagency and intergovernmental planning, training, exercising, assessment, and information exchange.

II. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS AND SITUATIONS

The *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan* is based on the planning assumptions, situations, considerations, and risk assessments presented in this section.

A. Assumptions

1. Incidents are typically managed at the lowest possible geographic, organizational, and jurisdictional level.
2. State agencies' capabilities to carry out response and recovery tasks are enhanced through the creation and testing of adequate agency continuity of operations plans and procedures.
3. Emergency response and recovery activities will be initiated and conducted using the principles contained in the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
4. The combined expertise and capabilities of government at all levels, the private sector, and the nongovernmental organizations will be required to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents of major or catastrophic proportions.
5. Incidents including major emergencies or catastrophic events will require full coordination of operations and resources, and might:
 - a. Occur at any time with little or no warning;
 - b. Require significant information-sharing at the unclassified and classified levels across multiple jurisdictions and between the public and private sectors;
 - c. Involve single or multiple jurisdictions and/or geographic areas;

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- d. Have significant statewide and/or national impact and/or require significant inter-governmental resource coordination and/or assistance;
 - e. Span the spectrum of incident management to include prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation;
 - f. Involve multiple, highly varied hazards or threats on a local, regional, statewide or national scale;
 - g. Result in numerous casualties, fatalities, displaced people, property loss, significant damage to the environment, and disruption of economy and normal life support systems, essential public services, and basic infrastructure;
 - h. Impact critical infrastructures across sectors;
 - i. Overwhelm capabilities of state agencies, local governments, and private-sector infrastructure owners and operators;
 - j. Attract a sizeable influx of independent, spontaneous volunteers and supplies;
 - k. Require extremely short-notice state asset coordination and response timelines; and
 - l. Require prolonged, sustained incident management operations and support activities requisite to long term community recovery and mitigation.
6. Top priorities for incident management are to:
- a. Save lives and protect the health and safety of the public, responders, and recovery workers;
 - b. Ensure security of the Commonwealth;
 - c. Prevent an imminent incident, such as acts of terrorism, from occurring;
 - d. Protect and restore critical infrastructure and key resources;
 - e. Protect property and mitigate damages and impacts to individuals, communities, and the environment;
 - f. Facilitate recovery of individuals, families, businesses, communities, governments, and the environment; and
 - g. Manage public expectations regarding response activities.
7. The provision of state assistance and the deployment of state resources for emergency response are dependent upon the receipt of prompt and accurate situational information from local officials; the state may deploy on-site advance teams to local jurisdictions to assess severity of impact and expedite the delivery of state resources.

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8. The Governor may issue an executive order declaring that a “state of emergency” exists in all or a portion of the Commonwealth of Virginia; the order implements the *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan*.
9. The severity of the impact on state and local resources might necessitate a request for federal assistance; factors that might determine the need for federal involvement in response and recovery might include:
 - a. State or local needs that exceed available resources;
 - b. The economic ability of the state and the affected localities to recover from the incident;
 - c. The type or location of the incident;
 - d. The severity and magnitude of the incident; and
 - e. The need to protect the public health or welfare or the environment.
10. During incidents for which the President has declared an emergency or major disaster, federal support to states is delivered in accordance with relevant provisions of the Stafford Act (see Appendix C, Authorities and References). For procedures to request federal assistance for emergency response and recovery, as authorized in the Stafford Act, see Appendix E.
11. As a signatory to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), the Commonwealth may participate in interstate cooperation including the requesting of response and recovery resources from other states and the sending of resources to other states. The Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.28:1) authorizes reimbursement for services the Commonwealth requests from other states and payment for services sent to other states through EMAC.

B. Situations and Considerations

1. *The Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws*, require that the state and each city and county within the state establish an emergency management organization and that they develop and maintain a current Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) structured around existing constitutional government.
2. The negative effects on Virginia’s residents and its economy of natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, winter storms and wildfires are increasing due to increased urban development in vulnerable coastal areas, industrial expansion, traffic congestion and widespread use and transport of hazardous materials. These factors also increase the risk of man-made emergencies such as hazardous materials accidents, gas pipeline accidents, power failures, resource shortages and environmental contamination. In addition, the Commonwealth’s proximity to Washington DC and federal facilities located in Virginia increase the potential for terrorism events.
3. In Virginia, counties and independent cities have the primary responsibility for emergency operations and will commit all available resources to save lives and minimize

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- property damage. Should local emergency response capabilities be overwhelmed, outside assistance is available, either through mutual aid agreements with nearby jurisdictions, members of the Commonwealth's Statewide Mutual Aid Program or from the state through the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC).
4. The emergency management mission of Virginia state government, in cooperation with federal agencies and local governments, is to plan and prepare for emergency operations which will ensure that casualties and property damage will be minimized and pre-incident operations will be restored as rapidly as possible in the event of a large scale emergency or disaster situation.
 5. If the need for resources exceeds the capabilities of the localities and the state, the Governor may request federal assistance. The Governor may request the President to declare an emergency or a major disaster and may request assistance for individuals and for public entities, state agencies and local governments.
 6. Once the President declares an emergency or major disaster, federal disaster assistance may be available for such items as the repair and reconstruction of buildings and roads or for individual assistance to persons displaced from their homes. Assistance may also be available for local and state agencies to implement mitigation measures to reduce the probability of future damages. A substantial and well documented federal-state-local coordination effort is required to implement such assistance.

C. Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis

Preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation strategies are based on analyses of the known hazards in Virginia. Below is a table of natural hazards and their associated risks. For more detailed information, see Support Annex #3 - Virginia Standard and Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan. Man-made hazards are addressed in, Incident Annex III- Nuclear/Radiological Emergency Response Plan, Incident Annex IV-Terrorism Consequence Management Plan and Incident Annex VII -Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan

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TABLE 1-1. Natural Hazards Based on the *Virginia Standard and Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan*¹

Hazard	Type	Relative Risk Category
Blizzards/ Winter Storms	Including winter storms, Nor'easters, ice storms, and excessive cold	High
Coastal/ Shoreline Erosion	(Addressed under flooding)	Medium
Drought	Including excessive heat	Medium
Earthquake		Low
Flooding	Coastal	Medium
	Riverine	High
	Flooding Following Dam Failure	Low
High Wind/ Windstorm	Including Thunderstorms and Lightning	Low
Hurricane	Hurricane, generally	Medium
	Tropical Depressions	Low
	Tropical Storms	Medium
	Category 1	Medium
	Category 2	High
	Category 3	Low
Land Subsidence	Karst only	Low
Landslide		Low
Tornado	Tornadoes, generally and hail	High
	F0	Medium
	F1	High
	F2	Low
Wildfire		High

¹ The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) for the *Virginia Standard Hazard Mitigation Plan* was conducted primarily by the Virginia Tech Center for Geospatial Information Technology.

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III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Local Governments

The Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.19) designates powers and duties for emergency management to political subdivisions. Each entity shall have a director of emergency management who is either the mayor or city manager of an independent city, or in the case of a county, is either a member of the board of supervisors or the chief administrative officer.

Local authorities have primary responsibility for managing emergencies. Police, fire, emergency medical and health, emergency management, public works, environmental response, and other personnel are often the first to arrive and the last to leave an incident site. In some cases, state and federal assets may be used to advise or assist local officials in accordance with agency authorities and procedures. Mutual aid agreements provide mechanisms to mobilize and employ resources from neighboring jurisdictions to support the incident command.

When local resources and capabilities are overwhelmed, local officials may request assistance from the state. When state resources are overwhelmed, the Governor may request federal assistance under a Presidential disaster or emergency declaration. Summarized below are the responsibilities of the chief executive officer of the local government or other entity.

The local emergency management director:

- ❖ Is responsible for coordinating local resources to address the full spectrum of actions to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents involving all hazards including terrorism, natural disasters, accidents, and other contingencies;
- ❖ May suspend local laws and ordinances, such as to establish a curfew, direct evacuations, and, in coordination with the local health authority, to order quarantine;
- ❖ Provides leadership and plays a key role in communicating to the public, and in helping people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of domestic incident within the jurisdiction;
- ❖ Negotiates and enters into mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions to facilitate resource-sharing;
- ❖ Requests state assistance when local capabilities have been exceeded or exhausted; and
- ❖ Coordinates with state and federal officials after a disaster to implement recovery strategies and programs.

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B. State Government

Governor

As the chief executive officer of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Governor is responsible for the public safety and welfare of the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The powers and duties of the Governor in emergency management are addressed in the Code of Virginia (§44-146.17). The Governor -

- ❖ Is responsible for coordinating state resources to address the full spectrum of actions to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents in an all-hazards context to include terrorism, natural disasters, accidents, and other contingencies;
- ❖ Through the COVEOP, establishes the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) and assigns duties and responsibilities to state agencies;
- ❖ May declare a “state of emergency” verbally followed by a written executive order. The Governor has police powers to make, amend, and rescind orders and regulations; he may direct and compel evacuation of all or part of the populace from any stricken or threatened area;
- ❖ Provides leadership and plays a key role in communicating to the public and in helping people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of declared emergency within any jurisdiction of the Commonwealth;
- ❖ Encourages participation in mutual aid and implements authorities for the state to enter into mutual aid agreements with other states to facilitate resource-sharing;
- ❖ Is the Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth military forces (National Guard when in State Active Duty or Title 32 Status and the authorized State militias);
- ❖ May request federal assistance when it becomes clear that the capabilities of the Commonwealth will be insufficient or have been exceeded or exhausted;
- ❖ May expend “sum sufficient” monies; and
- ❖ May provide financial assistance to localities.

By executive order, the Governor has directed all executive branch agencies to develop, maintain and exercise continuity plans and procedures to ensure the capabilities of the Commonwealth of Virginia to carry out essential services, including emergency and disaster response and recovery.

State Agencies

All state agencies have the responsibility to have documented SOP’s for their response and recovery from a natural or man-made disaster. Additionally all VERT agencies will have SOP’s and plans for their responsibilities during any VERT activities.

State agencies having local emergency responsibilities will provide assistance directly to political subdivisions where possible. Those agencies having divisions, districts, or local offices will direct

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their area supervisors to participate in the local emergency planning process and become a part of the local emergency response organization, as appropriate.

General Responsibilities for Primary VERT Agencies

1. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

- ❖ Identify sources of bulk food for sheltered people; respond to highly contagious livestock, poultry and plant diseases/pests; respond to food safety and security emergencies.
- ❖ Develop and implement strategies to safely handle and dispose of contaminated agricultural and food products, as well as infected and dead farm animals.
- ❖ Provide recommendations for the response to, mitigation of, and recovery from the adverse effects of contamination on the agricultural sector and economy.
- ❖ Assist in the needs and damage assessment process of emergency response and recovery operations.
- ❖ Develop and maintain plans to establish and administer the state managed pet sheltering program.

2. Department of Emergency Management

- ❖ Establish and manage an Emergency Operations Center to coordinate statewide response to disasters, and ensure the most effective and efficient integration and utilization of local, state, and federal assets activated to address the situation at hand.
- ❖ Operate and maintain a state communications center to receive, prepare, and disseminate notifications, warnings, and associated protective actions.
- ❖ Develop standard operating procedures to facilitate the communications and operational interface between local, state, and federal agencies during all phases of disaster management.
- ❖ Develop and maintain plans and procedures to address the full spectrum of technological hazards.
- ❖ Coordinate the preparation and dissemination of public information releases with the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies.
- ❖ Coordinate needs assessment and damage assessment operations.
- ❖ Coordinate disaster assistance and recovery operations.
- ❖ Coordinate GIS support from other state agencies.

3. Department of Fire Programs

- ❖ Provide standardized training for structural fire suppression operations upon request.
- ❖ Support and coordinate resources from other localities or locations in controlling structural fires beyond the capabilities of any locality.
- ❖ Coordinate between the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) and local fire departments as needed to supplement and augment fire fighting resources from urban fire services for wild land fire suppression operations.
- ❖ Maintain, in conjunction with the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, an up-to date statewide inventory of structural firefighting resources.
- ❖ Provide training, guidance and assistance to citizens, the private/business sector and local governments in the promulgation and maintenance of appropriate fire protection programs and systems.

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- ❖ Maintain and coordinate a cadre of personnel resources from across the Commonwealth, trained in advanced elements of the ICS who may be mobilized and deployed as a Mobile Incident Support Team (MIST).

4. Department of Forestry

- ❖ Provide for the management and coordination of all activities on a statewide basis as they relate to the prevention and suppression of all wildland fires.
- ❖ Maintain a single Type 2 or higher all-risk incident management team as well as a minimum of three - Type 3 all risk incident management teams on a regional basis.
- ❖ Develop specialized response resources and crews according to capabilities including: dozer crew, chain saw crew, fireline hand crew, search and rescue, equipment repair, other specialized equipment, transportation, etc.
- ❖ Provide debris clearance and removal from highways, roads, bridges and state-owned property.
- ❖ Provide a statewide radio communications network to augment emergency service operations.
- ❖ Provide Forestry and wildfire related law enforcement, protection of life and property and traffic control.
- ❖ Provide emergency public information relating to wildfire or other natural emergencies.
- ❖ Provide initial damage assessments for all forest lands in the Commonwealth.
- ❖ Maintain bloodhound resources to assist with law enforcement and search and rescue.
- ❖ Maintain communications with the National Interagency Coordination Center to coordinate federal resources in support of local and state emergencies.
- ❖ Continually monitor the fire potential, on-going fire situation, and resources committed and available.

5. Department of Health

- ❖ Function as the lead agency for Health and Medical Services.
- ❖ Provide Mass Patient Care including pre-hospital emergency medical services and hospital care.
- ❖ Provide for Prevention of Disease to include surveillance and investigation of diseases.
- ❖ Assist Fatality Management operations and coordination including post mortem disease surveillance, death scene management operations, forensic examinations and collections, victim identification services and ante-mortem data collection with oversight provided by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.
- ❖ Provide guidance and technical assistance regarding emergency evacuation of People with Special Medical Needs.
- ❖ Dispense life-saving pharmaceuticals and medical supplies including the activation of the Strategic National Stockpile.

6. Information Technology Agency

- ❖ Provide and operate IT infrastructure including voice and data.
- ❖ Provide GIS service to state agencies.
- ❖ Procure technology on behalf of state agencies.

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- ❖ Provide enhanced 9-1-1 and radio engineering support services.

7. Department of Military Affairs

- ❖ Provide a liaison to the VEOC and unified command to facilitate the integration of military resources of the Commonwealth into emergency operations.
- ❖ Provide support to state response and recovery operations as necessary.
- ❖ Upon request, provide a liaison team to the Defense Coordinating Element (DCE) to ensure proper coordination between state and federal military forces.

8. Department of Social Services

- ❖ Develop and maintain plans to establish and manage mass care shelter operations in a timely manner, in coordination with local governments, the American Red Cross, and VDEM.
- ❖ Coordinate the development of a plan to promptly establish and manage a Family Assistance Center following a mass casualty event, in coordination with the appropriate local, state and federal agencies and private partners, to facilitate the exchange of information and the provision of services to relatives of victims.
- ❖ Assist the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) in determining requirements for temporary housing.
- ❖ Develop and administer the Individuals and Households Program/Other Needs Assistance authorized by the Stafford Act.

9. State Police

- ❖ Coordinate state law enforcement component of incident response and recovery operations.
- ❖ Assist in evacuating areas at risk in coordination with local and federal law enforcement authorities, and other emergency support functions.
- ❖ Implement traffic control actions in and around site.
- ❖ Establish the necessary security and accessibility policies around incident and evacuated areas in coordination with local and federal law enforcement.
- ❖ Establish and maintain notification and warning procedures to activate plan, response teams, and support resources and services.
- ❖ Coordinate the collection and preservation of evidence to support a criminal investigation during the response and recovery phases of an incident with other emergency support functions.

10. Department of Transportation

- ❖ Develop and maintain plans and procedures to support the ESF #1 (Transportation) in coordination with the Virginia Departments of Aviation (DOAV), Motor Vehicles (DMV), Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and the Virginia Port Authority (VPA).
- ❖ Provide back-up communications to support emergency response and recovery operations.
- ❖ Support the implementation of traffic control measures.
- ❖ Conduct initial and more detailed damage assessments of transportation infrastructure.

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- ❖ Restore transportation infrastructure that is the responsibility of VDOT. Assist cities and counties in the restoration of highways, roads, and bridges, upon request.
- ❖ Provide emergency engineering services.
- ❖ Coordinate debris clearance and management activities relating to the transportation system and adjacent properties.
- ❖ Maintain and implement the Emergency Highway Traffic Regulation Plan.
- ❖ Provide GIS support to the VEOC as requested.

C. Nongovernmental and Volunteer Organizations

Nongovernmental and voluntary organizations (NGOs) collaborate with first responders, governments at all levels, and other agencies and organizations providing relief services to sustain life, reduce physical and emotional distress, and promote recovery of disaster victims. In some localities, designated non-government organizations, such as the American Red Cross, provide specific disaster relief services during response and recovery in cooperation with local officials. In many localities, organized groups of NGOs coordinate long-term recovery activities.

The Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VAVOARD) is a statewide consortium of faith-based and non-profit organizations that are active in disaster relief. The VAVOARD represents its member organizations on the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) and communicates with the many voluntary organizations that provide significant capabilities to incident management and response and recovery efforts at all levels.

D. Private Sector

Under the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) concept, primary and support agencies coordinate with the private sector to effectively share information, form courses of action, and incorporate available resources to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from any threat or actual disaster or emergency.

The roles, responsibilities, and participation of the private sector during major incidents vary based on the nature of the organization and the type and impact of the incident. The table below summarizes the roles of private sector organizations.

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TABLE 1-2. Roles of Private-Sector Organizations

Organization	Role
Impacted Organization or Infrastructure	Private-sector organizations may be impacted by direct or indirect consequences of the incident. These include privately owned critical infrastructure, key resources, and other private-sector entities that are significant to local, regional, and national economic recovery from the incident. Examples of privately owned infrastructure include transportation, telecommunications, private utilities, financial institutions, and hospitals. Critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR) are grouped into 18 sectors that together provide essential functions and services supporting various aspects of the Virginia government, economy, and society.
Response Resource	Private-sector entities provide response resources (donated or compensated) during an incident – including specialized teams, essential service providers, 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-volunteer initiatives.
Regulated and/or Responsible Party	Owners/operators of certain regulated facilities or hazardous operations may be legally responsible for preparing for and preventing incidents from occurring and responding to an incident once it occurs. For example, Federal regulations require owners/operators of nuclear power plants to maintain emergency plans and facilities and to perform assessments, prompt notifications, and training for a response to an incident.
State/Local Emergency Organization Member	Private-sector organizations may serve as an active partner in local and state emergency preparedness and response organizations and activities.
Components of the State Economy	As the key element of the state economy, private-sector resilience and continuity of operations planning, as well as recovery and restoration from an actual incident, represent essential emergency management activities.

Private-sector organizations are critical to the capabilities of the VERT. They support the COVEOP by sharing information with the various state agencies, identifying risks, performing vulnerability assessments, developing emergency response and business continuity plans, enhancing their overall readiness, implementing appropriate prevention and protection programs, and donating or otherwise providing goods and services through contractual arrangement or government purchases to assist in response to and recovery from an incident.

Certain organizations are required by existing law and regulation to bear the cost of planning and response to incidents, regardless of cause. In some cases, these private-sector organizations are expected to mobilize and employ the resources necessary and available in accordance with their plans to address the consequences of incidents at their own facilities or incidents for which they are otherwise responsible.

Unless the response role is inherently governmental (e.g., law enforcement, etc.), private-sector organizations are encouraged to develop and maintain capabilities to respond to and manage a complete spectrum of incidents and emergencies. The Commonwealth’s emergency management community maintains ongoing interaction with the critical infrastructure and key resources industries to provide coordination for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. When practical, or when required by state or federal law, private-sector representatives are included in planning and exercises. The state or local government may, when they have contractual relationships, use government funds to direct private-sector response resources.

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E. Citizen Involvement

Strong partnerships with citizen groups and organizations provide support for incident management prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Local citizen groups provide capabilities to augment governmental response and recovery activities.

Local Citizen Corps Councils implement programs affiliated with state and national Citizen Corps, including Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), Medical Reserve Corps, Neighborhood Watch, and Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS). They provide opportunities for people with special skills and interests, develop targeted outreach for special-needs groups, and organize special projects and community events. The Citizen Corps program expands the resources and materials available to local communities through partnerships that offer resources for public education, outreach, and training; represent volunteers interested in helping to make their communities safer; or offer volunteer service opportunities to support first responders, disaster relief activities, and community safety efforts.

A safe and prepared citizenry is a priority of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Outreach programs, through state agencies, local governments, NGOs and private entities, promote awareness of personal and community risks and also the principle of personal responsibility. Preparedness information is available to Virginia residents from many sources including the Internet at <http://www.readyvirginia.gov> or <http://www.listovirginia.gov>. Crisis emergency information is disseminated immediately when a threat or incident occurs.

Citizens groups are also critical to the community recovery process after a disaster. The programs designed and implemented by federal, state and local governments, insurance providers and NGOs can never completely meet the needs of every individual. Local disaster recovery task forces or “unmet needs” groups can provide an effective and efficient forum for pooling community resources and coordinating the delivery of available resources to individuals and families in need. Citizens within a community are both the first and the last to respond to the needs of their neighbors.

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IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

This section describes the Commonwealth of Virginia emergency management coordinating structures, processes, and protocols employed for incident management. These coordinating structures and processes are designed to enable execution of the responsibilities of the Governor through the appropriate state departments and agencies, and to integrate Federal, state, local, non-governmental agencies and organizations, and private-sector efforts into a comprehensive statewide approach to incident management.

A basic premise of the COVEOP is that incidents are generally handled at the jurisdictional level closest to the event. Police, fire, emergency medical and health, emergency management, and other personnel are responsible for responding to local incidents. In some instances, a state or federal agency with principal activities or facilities in a local area may act as a first responder and may provide direction or assistance consistent with its specific statutory authorities and responsibilities. In the vast majority of incidents, local resources will operate under the umbrella of a mutual aid agreement or compact to provide the first line of emergency response and incident management support.

The COVEOP and local emergency operations plans (EOPs) are founded upon the concept that emergency operations will begin at the city and county level, and that state assistance will be provided upon request when emergency or disaster needs exceed local capabilities. Situations in which several localities are threatened or impacted concurrently usually involve the state from the onset. If the state is overwhelmed, the Governor may request federal assistance. At each level, the government should officially declare a 'state of emergency' to exist in order to request assistance. A local emergency declaration indicates that local resources capable of handling the situation are fully committed before state assistance is requested. Likewise, state resources should be fully committed before federal assistance is requested. Exceptions are made to these procedures when localities request state assistance with search and rescue or hazardous materials response.

This plan identifies the role of the state government before, during, and after a disaster or major emergency. It establishes the concepts and policies under which all elements of state government and its political subdivisions will operate during emergencies. It provides a basis for the preparation of more detailed plans and procedures and for state/local emergency management training programs. Agencies with primary emergency duties and responsibilities are also expected to develop and maintain separately published and more detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) as needed.

The following general principles apply to all parts of the *COVEOP*:

- ❖ Direction of emergency operations will be exercised by the level of government affected closest to the event.
- ❖ On-scene coordination of emergency response will be accomplished within the Incident Command System (ICS) framework allowing for the incorporation of local, state, federal agencies and other responsible parties into one organizational framework called the Unified Command.

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- ❖ Assistance from state agencies will be requested from and coordinated by the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC). The State EOC is the central location from which off-scene activities supported by the state are coordinated.
- ❖ All appropriate locally available forces and resources will be fully committed by the affected local government before requesting assistance from the state.
- ❖ Support furnished to local government from state agencies will be assigned on a mission-type basis and will be under the operational control of the department, agency, or office furnishing the support.

During normal operations, it is the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to manage the VEOC from which the Governor, or designee, can direct and control emergency operations statewide. The State Coordinator of Emergency Management is the Governor's designee to manage the VEOC and to coordinate the state's response to all emergencies and disasters. VDEM develops detailed procedures for VEOC operations, manages an ongoing training program for the VEOC staff, and maintains adequate facilities and equipment for VEOC operations. Agencies assigned responsibilities in the VEOC designate staff to respond to the VEOC and to participate in training.

In time of emergency, VDEM provides (1) centralized state government emergency operations in order to coordinate the delivery of resources to local governments, (2) advice and counsel to the Governor, or the Governor's designee, to formulate policy, establish priorities, collect and analyze information, and disseminate information, and (3) communications with the federal government related to conditions or developing situations related to the emergency.

The VEOC will be under the control of the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, who reports directly to the Governor or designee. The supporting VEOC staff is the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) comprised of employees of VDEM, other designated state agencies, representatives of VAVOAD, and designated private sector entities. As the situation warrants, federal agencies may also have representatives in the VEOC during emergencies.

B. Overall Coordination of Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)

The Code of Virginia (Title 44-146) provides that emergency management organizations and operations will be structured around existing constitutional government. The Governor is the Director of Emergency Management for the Commonwealth. The Governor appoints a State Coordinator of Emergency Management to head the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM). The State Coordinator appoints the VERT Coordinator, who manages the VEOC and coordinates response activities, and the VERT Recovery Manager, who coordinates state recovery activities for a disaster that is declared by the President as authorized by the Stafford Act. For a presidentially declared disaster, the State Coordinator is usually designated the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) by the Governor.

Agencies of Virginia state government that have been assigned primary, support, and/or cooperating emergency response or recovery duties and responsibilities are collectively known as the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT). All VERT agencies must develop and maintain their designated part(s) of the COVEOP.

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C. VERT Organization Structure

The state organization for emergency operations includes:

1. The Governor and his immediate staff.
2. State resources coordinated by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) during normal operations and the VERT during augmentations or activations. The VERT agencies manage resource requests and fulfillment from the VEOC. For recovery operations the VERT Recovery Manager and staff are co-located with federal officials in a Joint Field Office (JFO).
3. State departments and agencies are assigned emergency responsibilities in the COVEOP. This plan identifies emergency support functions (ESF) and assigns primary, support, and/or cooperating agencies for each function. (See Appendix F: State Emergency Support Function Matrix).
4. Regional coordination agencies. When appropriate, state agency emergency coordination teams are organized within VDEM's seven emergency management regions. State agencies' regional staffs and VDEM Local Support Services collaborate in the development of regional coordination plans.
5. Local governments. Each city and county is required to have an emergency management organization. Locally available manpower, materials, equipment, and facilities are identified in each local emergency operations plan (EOP). Non-affected localities may be requested to provide assistance through the Statewide Mutual Aid Program.
6. Federal agencies upon request within their statutory authority.
7. Non-governmental organizations designated in the COVEOP and/or affiliated with ESFs. Some voluntary agencies enter into agreements with the Commonwealth of Virginia to perform specific disaster functions.
8. Private sector counterparts working with the primary state agency for each ESF through partnership committees or other means (e.g., ESF #2, Communications – telecommunications industry; ESF #10, Oil and Hazardous Materials Response – oil and hazardous materials industries; etc.) will be incorporated into the VERT as deemed necessary by the situation.

D. Additional VERT Organizational Elements

VECTOR: The Virginia Evacuation Coordination Team for Operational Response is located within the Operations Section of the VERT. VECTOR is responsible for the coordination of evacuation and shelter operations. VECTOR represents several key agencies including DSS, VDOT, VSP, Virginia National Guard, VDACS and VDEM.

STATE/FEDERAL TEAMS: The VDEM Local Support Services Division will deploy and manage VDEM Regional Coordinators to provide maximum support to impacted localities. It will also coordinate the mobilization of trained adjunct staff to form state/federal teams should FEMA activate its program of State Liaison Officers. The Local Support Services Division will also

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coordinate the entry of state/federal teams into localities with the goal to minimize disruption to local response and recovery efforts. During VERT Response Operations, Local Support Services director or designee will be located in the VEOC or may operate in a mobile capacity.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY: ESF #14 is responsible for coordinating short- and long-term recovery operations. This ESF supports both the short- and long-term recovery phases through a framework comprised of the following components: an assessment process that determines needs; a mechanism that ensures the effective and efficient identification, application and coordination of resources to maximize benefits; and the necessary technical support to address issues that may arise in the implementation of strategies and projects associated with each phase. ESF #14 also assists in the communications and interface between localities, regions, state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and FEMA as well as other event specific support agencies.

Short-Term Recovery

The short-term component of the recovery process, which is coordinated by a core group comprised principally of VDEM staff, supports a variety of activities to include: reviewing and assessing initial damage assessments; recommending, arranging, and supporting Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDAs); developing the Governor's letter and associated documentation requesting a federal declaration and the establishment of the Joint Field Office (JFO) with FEMA if the declaration request is approved. The JFO focuses primarily on the delivery of disaster assistance programs authorized by The Stafford Act, the management of the cost reimbursement process, and the coordination of available resources and support from local, state, federal, non-governmental organizations and private sector resources. (See Appendix E).

Long-Term Recovery and the Economic Crisis Strike Force

The Long-term Recovery component of ESF #14 will initially be staffed by 1 to 2 representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing Development Authority to assess the severity of the impacts on the community, and begin defining the anticipated long-term recovery needs and resource requirements. The assessment associated with the long-term phase is more broad in scope and focuses on the social and economic fabric of the community and associated infrastructure. Factors that will be considered in this process will include the following:

- Impacts on the housing sector and the projected number of displaced persons on a long-term basis;
- The severity and scope of the infrastructure damage precipitating major service and economic disruptions and impacting negatively on overall response and recovery operations;
- Impacts on key sectors of the communities' economic base.

The Recovery staff will interface and coordinate with ESF #6 to better define the long-term housing needs of people in shelters, and begin coordinating with federal, state, local, and voluntary and private sector partners in regard to available resources outside of but in close proximity to the impact area. In order to find solutions to the deficits in available housing that were created by the disaster, several factors will need to be defined and evaluated: (1) the size and scope of the event; (2) the number of households needing housing; (3) and the characteristics of the remaining housing inventory, both public and private.

Based on the initial assessment of long term recovery needs and resource requirements, and following consultation with the appropriate state officials and support agencies, the ESF #14

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Long Term Recovery team will make a recommendation with regard to the activation of the Economic Crisis Strike Force, which is led by the Secretary of Commerce and Trade. This strike force will begin developing the necessary plans, priorities, initiatives and assistance to address the long term recovery issues identified. The Long-term Recovery Liaison team will continue to interface and coordinate with the short-term recovery component until the housing and associated issues of the shelter population have been addressed. The Economic Crisis Strike Force will support and be represented in the Joint Field Office as required. It will also continue supporting long-term recovery processes under the direction of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade until the long-term recovery objectives have been fulfilled.

The Economic Crisis Strike Force was established in 2006 to respond as needed to economic disasters in Virginia communities by assisting localities in developing short and long-term strategies to address the crisis and provide a single point of contact for citizens in affected communities. A natural disaster or act of terrorism, for which the Governor has declared a state of emergency, may create an “economic disaster” as defined in the *Code* (§ 2.2-205.1.E).

In practice, the response and recovery operational phases (and the associated activities) overlap in a given event. Government agencies must prepare to coordinate and resource both types of activities during pre-emergency planning and post-emergency operations. The ESF structure continues from response into the recovery phase although the activities and focus within an ESF might change.

State Public Assistance Program – Emergency Relief to Localities

For incidents that do not meet the level of impact to result in a federal declaration, state recovery programs may be implemented with or without a field office near the disaster site. The Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.28) established a state public assistance program entitled Emergency Relief to Localities to assist local governments recover eligible costs associated with localized major emergencies or disasters that lack sufficient damages to warrant a Presidential Declaration. The program, which is administered by VDEM, is structured like the federal PA program in terms of categories of work and having a threshold requirement. The program is considered as a program of last resort for those local jurisdictions that cannot meet the full cost. Any assistance provided under the program is at the discretion of the Governor.

Assistance from Small Business Administration and Other Programs

In incidents where there are uninsured losses to private properties, residential or commercial, but there is not a presidential declaration of major disaster under the Stafford Act, the Small Business Administration may declare a disaster and set up disaster loan application centers near the area of impact. There are also other federal and state emergency assistance programs that may apply without a presidential declaration of major disaster. (See Appendix E)

National Disaster Housing Strategy

The National Disaster Housing Strategy, which FEMA finalized and distributed in January 2009, charts a new direction to more effectively meet the needs of disaster victims and communities. The Strategy provides a comprehensive, flexible framework that allows communities to quickly identify the necessary resources to develop and implement a plan tailored to community needs, characteristics and market conditions (See Appendix E)

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V. INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

The Commonwealth of Virginia is dedicated to providing assistance to local governments and their citizens throughout the period between impact and recovery. Disaster response and recovery efforts are carried out by many federal, state, and local government agencies in partnerships with private and non-profit organizations.

A. Actions

Incident management begins with identification of a risk or threat and concludes when those impacted have been restored to pre-incident conditions. Actions include notification and warning, activation of the VERT, response actions, assessment of impact, and request for federal assistance, recovery actions, mitigation actions and long-term community recovery.

1. Notification

- State agencies, local governments, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations report threats, incidents, and potential incidents using established communications and reporting channels.
- The Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and/or the Virginia Fusion Center receive threat and operational information regarding incidents or potential incidents. The VEOC makes an initial determination to implement Federal information-sharing and incident management protocols.

2. Warning

- Public notifications will be made through:
 - Public Announcement
 - Watches and Warning
 - Emergency Alert System (EAS)
 - Other Emergency Bulletins

3. Activation of the VERT

The Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) receives notification of conditions, events, and/or occurrences that may impact the Commonwealth, reports of hazardous conditions existing within the Commonwealth, and requests for assistance from local governments.

In support of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management's mission, the VEOC maintains an Incident Management Cadre (IMC) to assist the VERT Coordinator, if requested, in determining the requirement to augment the VERT. The IMC consists of personnel designated by the VERT Coordinator, to include but not limited to representatives of Public Affairs, Local Support Services, Operations, Logistics, Planning, Finance and subject matter experts, as required. The VERT Coordinator will, based on information provided from the IMC, brief the State Coordinator and/or his or her designee(s) of the operational course of action.

The VERT Coordinator, in consultation with the State Coordinator, Deputy State Coordinator, and/or his or her designee, will initiate the notification of the appropriate

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VERT Staff and necessary state agency points of contact of an augmentation and request representatives to support the VERT. Under some conditions, federal officials may be present in the VEOC as a liaison.

Based on an analysis of the information received, the State Coordinator recommends to the Governor that he declare a state of emergency, so that state resources can be immediately prepared or deployed to impacted areas. As authorized by the Code of Virginia, the Governor issues an executive order declaring that a state of emergency exists and activating this plan.

4. Response Actions

The VEOC directs state response activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. These activities include immediate actions to preserve life, property, and the environment; meet basic human needs, and maintain the social, economic, and political structure of the affected community.

As part of an effective response, the VERT must continuously refine its ability to assess the situation as an incident unfolds and rapidly provide accurate and accessible information to decision makers by developing processes and procedures to maintain situational awareness and a common operating picture.

Response actions also include protective actions such as

- ❖ Immediate law enforcement,
- ❖ Fire, ambulance, and emergency medical service actions; emergency flood fighting;
- ❖ Evacuations; transportation system detours;
- ❖ Emergency public information; actions taken to minimize additional damage;
- ❖ Urban search and rescue;
- ❖ Establishment of facilities for mass care including shelters and feeding operations;
- ❖ Provision of public health and medical services, food, water, and other emergency essentials;
- ❖ Debris clearance; the emergency restoration of critical infrastructure;
- ❖ Control, containment, and removal of environmental contamination;
- ❖ Protection of responder health and safety.

5. Assess Damages and Analyze Impact

An assessment of the impact of an incident begins at the local level. Local officials are required to submit situation reports to the VEOC throughout the course of the incident, and to send an Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) to the VEOC within 72 hours of the impact of the event. It is critical that the information provided in the IDA accurately reflects the damages and impacts sustained by the community as the decision to request a Preliminary Damage Assessment and seek a Presidential disaster declaration is made on the basis of this information.

As the situation changes and new information becomes available, local officials will update the VEOC. The information should be submitted to the VEOC ideally through WebEOC or on the standard forms provided by VDEM. The VEOC staff summarizes the

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damage assessments from all sources and evaluates the impact of the incident on localities and on the state. The VEOC determines the capabilities of the state resources to manage the incident. If the damages or sustained impact of the incident threaten to overwhelm the resources of the Commonwealth, the State Coordinator of Emergency Management will request FEMA Region III to conduct a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) in coordination with the state and localities impacted, to verify the damages and estimate the amount of supplemental assistance that will be needed. ESF #14, VERT and FEMA will coordinate the joint PDAs from the VEOC. The PDAs will target damages identified on the Initial Damage Assessments submitted that may be eligible for federal assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Act, as amended (e.g., Individual Assistance, Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation), or the Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loan Program. State and federal personnel knowledgeable in these programs will accompany local officials to the damaged sites. (See Appendix E)

6. Requests for Federal Assistance under the Stafford Act

The State Coordinator of Emergency Management will report the findings of the PDAs to the Governor and recommend whether to request federal assistance under the Stafford Act. The Governor may then send a letter to the President requesting a declaration of emergency or major disaster for specific localities in the Commonwealth.

When a large scale disaster is imminent it might be obvious that the scope of the event justifies federal assistance. For an expedited declaration, the Governor relies on forecasted or visual impact rather than damages verified through the PDA process. (See Appendix E)

If the Governor's request for a federal declaration is approved, the declaration will specify the federal assistance programs that will be made available to the state, as well as the jurisdictions included in the action. A Public Assistance Disaster Declaration provides the basis for financial and other forms of aid to state and local governments, non-profit organizations and federally recognized Indian Tribes for debris removal, implementation of protective measures, and damages sustained to critical infrastructure. An Individual Assistance Disaster Declaration provides the basis for financial and other forms of aid to private citizens and, to a more limited extent, to businesses. Sometimes when a disaster event does not meet the criteria for a Stafford Act Individual Assistance Disaster Declaration, it may meet the criteria for a Small Business Disaster Declaration. The SBA Administrator can approve this type of disaster declaration. Other federal disaster assistance declarations that can be authorized independently include the U.S. Department of Agriculture declarations and the DHS/FEMA Fire Management Assistance declarations.

7. Recovery Actions

Recovery involves actions needed to help individuals and communities return to pre-incident conditions when feasible. The Commonwealth joins with federal agencies to establish a Joint Field Office (JFO) that serves as the central coordination point among Federal, State, local and voluntary organizations for delivering recovery assistance programs.

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Recovery actions typically include the direct financial assistance to eligible individuals who have lost residential dwellings or personal property and the coordination, and execution of service and site-restoration plans and the reconstitution of government operations and services through private-sector, nongovernmental, and public assistance programs. Voluntary and non-governmental organizations are usually major contributors to rebuilding and recovery activities.

Long-term environmental recovery may include cleanup and restoration of public facilities, businesses, and residences; re-establishment of habitats and prevention of subsequent damage to natural resources; protection of cultural or archeological sites; and protection of natural, cultural, and historical resources from intentional damage during other recovery operations.

For long-term economic recovery the Governor may convene the Economic Crisis Strike Force to facilitate the development of a long-term strategy for the economic and social reconstruction and redevelopment of the affected communities, as outlined in the *ESF #14 Annex*. The recovery strategy will establish priorities for the infrastructure, housing, human services and economy of the affected community and its region.

8. Mitigation Actions

Hazard mitigation involves reducing or eliminating long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their side effects. The JFO is the central coordination point among Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for beginning the process that leads to the delivery of mitigation assistance programs.

Mitigation activities are designed to identify and implement measures to reduce or eliminate risks to persons or property or to lessen the actual or potential effects or consequences of an incident. Mitigation measures may be implemented prior to, during, or after an incident, and must be in accordance with stated objectives and strategies within state and local hazard mitigation plans.

The joint federal-state mitigation unit in the JFO coordinates the delivery of mitigation programs within the affected area, including:

- ❖ Grant programs for loss reduction measures (if available);
- ❖ Delivery of loss reduction building-science expertise;
- ❖ Coordination of Federal flood insurance operations and integration of mitigation with other program efforts;
- ❖ Conducting hazard recovery mapping to permit expedited and accurate implementation of both recovery and mitigation programs;
- ❖ Predictive modeling to protect critical assets;
- ❖ Early documentation of losses avoided due to previous hazard mitigation measures; and
- ❖ Community education and outreach necessary to foster loss reduction.

ESF #14 Recovery along with the State, local, and tribal officials, will participate in the development of a long-term recovery strategy for the impacted area(s).

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B. Homeland Security Advisory System in Virginia

1. The Commonwealth of Virginia utilizes the national Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS), as a means for disseminating information regarding the risk of terrorist attacks and coordinating appropriate response measures across jurisdictions and with the private sector. The HSAS is composed of two separate elements: (1) threat products and (2) threat condition.
 - ❖ **Threat products** include warning (advisories) and non-warning (information bulletins) products designed to inform Federal, State, local, tribal, and nongovernmental entities and private citizens of threat or incident information.
 - ❖ **Threat condition** provides a guide to assist government and private-sector entities in initiating a set of standardized actions as a result of increased terrorist threat levels within the United States, and to inform the public on updated homeland security requirements. The raising of the threat condition generally is reserved for threats that are credible, corroborated, and imminent. An elevated threat condition can be applied nationally or by region, by industry sector, or to a specific target. During an increase in threat condition, DHS may notify, activate, and deploy NRF organizational elements in an effort to enhance the Nation's ability to prevent, prepare for, or respond to an attack.
2. The Commonwealth has adopted an alert advisory system called the Virginia Homeland Security Terrorist Threat Conditions, which is similar to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Advisory System. Both systems categorize credible threats at five color-coded levels ranging from green (low threat/low risk) to red (severe threat/imminent risk). The higher the threat condition, the greater the risk of a terrorist attack. Risk includes both the probability of an attack occurring and its potential gravity.

The VA and the DHS systems are reachable from:

<http://www.vaemergency.com/threats/terrorism/toolkit/threatlevels.cfm>

3. The VEOC is in continuous contact with DHS officials and will receive advance notice of any activity by DHS to change the threat level. The Office of Commonwealth Preparedness, as the liaison between the Governor and the DHS, will weigh the information and make a recommendation. The Governor will announce to the public any change in the threat level for the Commonwealth.

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VI. ONGOING PLAN MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

A. Coordination

The Commonwealth of Virginia uses the “preparedness organization” concept described in the NIMS for preparedness and maintenance of the *COVEOP*. The organization includes all agencies with a role in incident management and provides a forum for coordination of planning, training, equipping, and other preparedness requirements.

- The Office of Commonwealth Preparedness (OCP)

Effective July 1, 2006, the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness was established to work with federal, state and local officials, as well as the private sector, to develop a seamless, coordinated security and preparedness strategy and implementation plan. OCP serves as the liaison between the Governor and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The *COVEOP* is compatible with the OCP strategic plan.

- Secure Commonwealth Panel

Appointed by the governor and assigned the responsibility to “monitor and assess the implementation of statewide prevention, preparedness, response and recovery initiatives....” OCP provides staff for the panel.

- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

The Code of Virginia assigns the Department of Emergency Management the tasks to “administer the emergency services and disaster preparedness programs.” VDEM coordinates with political subdivisions and state agencies and with the federal government and any public or private agency or entity to achieve the coordination of comprehensive emergency management in the Commonwealth. VDEM is responsible for the development and maintenance of the *COVEOP*.

Executive Order 65 in 2004 directed every state agency to whom responsibilities are assigned in the *COVEOP* to designate an Emergency Coordination Officer (ECO) and an alternate to be responsible for ensuring that agency plans and procedures are developed and maintained.

B. *COVEOP* Plan Maintenance

1. The Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) maintains the *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)*. The *COVEOP* is reviewed continually and updated periodically as required to incorporate federal policy changes, new gubernatorial directives, legislative changes, and procedural changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events. The *COVEOP* should be reviewed and adopted in its entirety by the Governor at least every four years. This section establishes procedures for interim changes and full updates of the *COVEOP*.
2. Changes include additions of new or supplementary material and deletions. No proposed change should contradict or override authorities or other plans now contained in statute or regulation.

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3. Any department or agency may propose and develop a change to the *COVEOP*. VDEM is responsible for coordinating review of the proposed change among the primary and support agencies of each affected ESF and any associated agency program areas as required.
4. VDEM has developed and will maintain a procedure for changes that will include:
 - a. Obtaining the official written approval for the change from the appropriate officials of the affected agencies; and
 - b. A process to notify and receive approval from the Governor for all requested changes.
 - c. Ensure appropriate notification is made about the changes and maintain a record of changes.
5. Notice of Change. After coordination has been accomplished, including receipt of the necessary signed approval supporting the final change language, VDEM will issue an official Notice of Change.
 - a. Once published, the changes will be considered part of the *COVEOP* for operational purposes pending a formal revision and re-issuance of the entire document.
 - b. Any changes that result from reviews will be posted on the VDEM website and circulated to VERT agencies.
6. Distribution. VDEM will distribute each Notice of Change to all participating state agencies, FEMA Region III, and local emergency management offices. Notices of Change to other organizations will be provided upon request.
7. Promulgation of the *COVEOP*.

Prior to the four-year revision, VDEM may convene a COVEOP Plan Committee and revise areas of the plan identified by the committee. VDEM will send the final draft of the revised *COVEOP* to the Secretary of Public Safety for review and concurrence prior to submitting the plan to the Governor for approval and promulgation by Executive Order.

C. Standards for other Commonwealth Emergency Plans

The *COVEOP*, including all annexes, is the core plan for emergency operations, and provides the structures and processes for coordinating incident management activities for terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other emergencies. Following the guidance provided by the *National Response Framework* (NRF), National Incident Management System (NIMS), and other supporting documents, the *COVEOP* incorporates or provides an umbrella configuration for existing state emergency and incident management plans (with appropriate modifications and revisions) as integrated components of the *COVEOP*, as supplements, or as supporting operational plans.

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Accordingly, state agencies must incorporate key *COVEOP* concepts and procedures for working with *COVEOP* organizational elements when developing or updating incident management and emergency response plans. All additional emergency response and recovery plans and procedures developed by agencies should be compatible with the *COVEOP*. Agencies are responsible for providing access to current agency plans.

D. Plan Testing, Training and Exercises

The responsible state departments and agencies will conduct training to ensure the *COVEOP* may be implemented in accordance with recommended procedures and guidelines.

The VDEM will conduct an annual VERT exercise (VERTEX) of the *COVEOP*. As required by the Code of Virginia, the exercise will address, among other issues, a prolonged and widespread loss of electric power. The exercises could include multiple agencies, multiple jurisdictions, private partners and NGO's. In addition, the VERT will participate with FEMA and Dominion Resources in an annual exercise of Incident Annex III – *Radiological Emergency Response Plan*. Any planning deficiencies, findings, areas recommended for corrective action, or improvement arising from these two exercises, or any other exercises coordinated from the VEOC, will be considered and corrected by appropriate training, plan update, and/or demonstration in any subsequent exercise or postulated event. VDEM has developed and instituted an after action review process in which all VERT agencies, when assigned, participate.

E. Plan Implementation

This plan is effective for execution upon and pursuant to the Executive Order promulgating the same. The State Coordinator of Emergency Management will ensure that this document is subject to annual maintenance, review, and update based on selective evaluations, after-action reports, and new guidance.

Portions of this plan shall be placed on the state emergency management website, www.vaemergency.com and shall be accessible to the general public.

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