

## **All About Emergency Operations Plans**

### **The EOP**

An Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) contains information on how citizens and property, including animals, will be protected in a disaster or in a disaster-threatening situation. It describes actions that may be required for any natural or technologic hazard. It details the tasks to be carried out by specified organizations and individuals at projected places and times based on established objectives, assumptions, and a realistic assessment of capabilities.

State EOPs are federally mandated. Local EOPs are essential to be able to put local resources to efficient use and to support applications for state and federal disaster relief funding should the need arise. Regardless of how many resources a community has, putting them to use without a plan is of little value. A plan avoids duplication of resources and responses and allows effective integration with state and federal level assistance.

### **Concepts of the Emergency Operations Plan**

An EOP ties together three related concepts:

- Plans work best by relying on existing structures of organizations regularly responsive to nonemergency duties. Everyday responses to issues similar to typical ones that arise in disasters are the best way to prepare for extraordinary events.
- Crises should be met at the lowest and most immediate level of government. Plans should call for a local response supplemented if necessary by the next higher jurisdiction.

Voluntary response and involvement of the private sector (business, industry, and the public) should be sought and emphasized. The emergency management partnership is important in all phases and types of disasters.

In the development of plans for the care of animals the above concepts mean the following:

- A local EOP should be developed in concert with local animal control agencies, veterinary services, humane shelters, and other permanent businesses, associations, and professionals in the community. Participants should be selected based on their daily involvement with issues surrounding animals and their owners.
- The development of local EOPs does not have to involve national or state groups. Developing local disaster preparedness plans has the highest priority and taps into local resources. A community plan that has the same format as other plans from higher jurisdictions ensures effective collaboration in the event of a large-scale disaster. Local EOPs should have a format that integrates them with state plans. (Actually, if all communities had fully developed EOPs, the need for state EOPs would be small.)

Everybody who wants to help can be integrated into either statutory or support functions somewhere in the system.

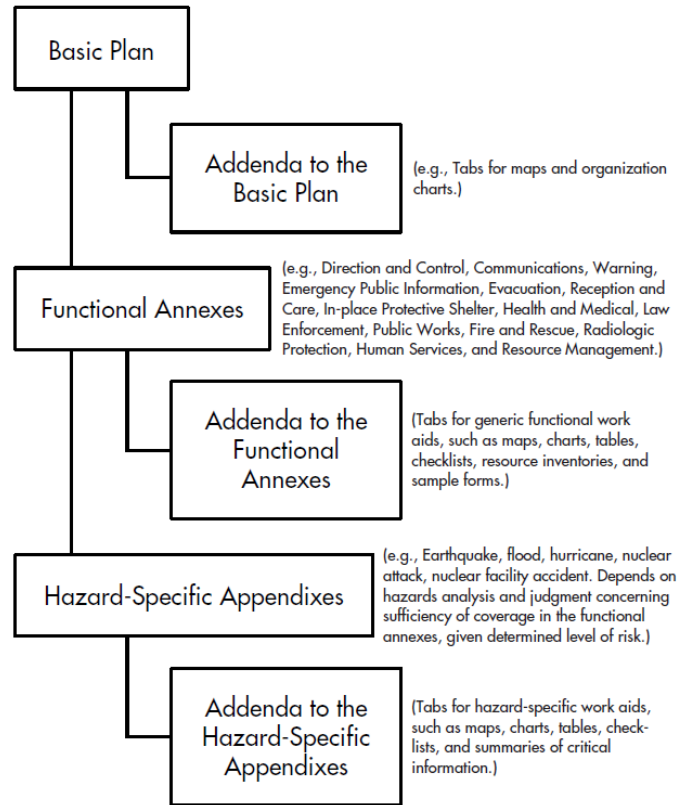


FIG. 19-1 Components of an emergency operations plan (EOP). (From Federal Emergency Management Agency: *Guide for the development of state and local emergency operations plans*, FEMA CPG 1-8, Washington, DC, 1990, FEMA.)

### Components of the Emergency Operations Plan

The EOP is the formal goal of planning. It should cover all aspects of emergency management and all types of emergencies. The three basic components of the EOP (Fig. 19-1) are an overview statement of a jurisdiction's approach to emergency management, including broad policies, plans, and procedures; functional annexes that address specific activities critical to emergency response and recovery (Table 19-1); and hazard specific appendices that support each functional annex as necessary. Appendices contain technical information, details, and methods for use in emergency operations.

**Table 19-1** Examples of annexes to a basic Emergency Operations Plan

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Agricultural Services  
Care of Animals  
Communications  
Damage Assessment and Analysis  
Direction and Control  
Engineering Services  
Evacuation  
Fire  
Health and Medical Services  
Law Enforcement  
Mass Care  
Public Information  
Radiological Defense  
Recovery  
Resources Management  
Search and Rescue  
Shelter  
Transportation  
Warning

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### **Characteristics of a Good Plan**

The best plans are developed by a team of the persons and organizations who have active roles to play in the event of a disaster. A good plan is the result when its developers keep the following in mind:

- Local planning is the basis of all planning. The next higher jurisdiction should be called on only if necessary.
- A community plan that has the same format as plans from higher jurisdictions ensures effective collaboration in the event of a large-scale disaster.
- Plans work best if their implementation is based on existing organizations that routinely deal with issues likely to arise in disasters.
- Plan development and implementation is a team effort that relies on volunteer work and partnerships.

### **Local Preparedness**

Local resources and experts are most qualified to identify common hazards and to prioritize mitigation and planning that will reduce the impact of these hazards. Even in a devastating disaster requiring assistance from outside, the rebuilding of infrastructure and services is most efficiently accomplished when the local community has a clear idea about its priorities for recovery and who should be involved in decisions. Local resources can best handle donations that will help during the response and recovery phases. A functional local EOP prepared before a disaster is the key to smooth operations after a disaster.

### **Assumptions When a Plan Is Developed**

Both the emergency management and the animal care community have unique professional skills. In disaster planning these groups should realize that their expertise is complementary. For example, professional animal care providers know what to do with animals but have to learn how to integrate with emergency management, and emergency management personnel know how to

coordinate all phases of a disaster but should rely on professional animal care providers to deal with animal-related issues. The qualifications to be part of a disaster preparedness planning team should be the same as for any emergency response group. The principles of plan development include the following:

- The plan should address common threats.
- The plan should address the behaviors of people that are likely to occur rather than what one suspects or wishes to see happen.
- The plan should be developed by persons who represent groups and organizations that will have primary, hands on responsibilities in a disaster.
- Plans should be developed for the improved health of the community as a whole.
- The incorporation of the care of animals into disaster preparedness plans should be seen as a method to facilitate better care of persons.
- The care of animals per se is of secondary interest (better animal care will automatically result from better care of owners and of animal-related businesses).

### **Hazard Analysis**

Federal, state, and local EMAs generate and maintain information on all foreseeable hazards in the United States. This is referred to as “all-hazards” identification, and data on most communities are available through the HAZUS program, which has mapped out hazards throughout the United States using a Geographic Information System.

### **Standard Operating Procedures**

The final step in the development of an EOP is to work out the procedural details of who will do what and how they will accomplish this. These are the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and are attached to the appendix of the plan. SOPs should be developed by persons who collectively have a clear understanding of emergency management, animal care, and the procedure that is being developed. Appendix I gives examples of SOPs.