
Situation Status Annex

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Situation Status Annex

This annex explains the operation of the Situation Status Unit during a disaster. The response checklists that follow will serve as reminders during an actual response effort. The Situation Status Leader is appointed by the Planning Section Chief, and usually is a member of the Department of Planning and Public Works and/or someone with expertise in the type of incident.

The priorities of this Unit are:

- Information needed to determine operational problems and immediate needs of victims. In the Immediate Impact Phase this overrides other information priorities.
- Specific information on damage assessment, including estimates of dollar amount, economic impact, etc. This is the basis for State and Federal action regarding declaration of a disaster.
- Information needed to plan for short and long range recovery. This has low initial priority, but becomes very important during the recovery phase.

I. OBJECTIVES

During a disaster, the objectives of the Situation Status Unit are to:

- A. Gather and analyze information on the nature, severity, and extent of the disaster.
- B. Report this information clearly and correctly. These reports will guide response decisions.

II. PHASES OF THE EMERGENCY

A. Before

1. Review the Situation Status portion of the Emergency Plan periodically to add or revise checklists as needed to fully complete and maintain the

Situation Status portion of the Emergency Plan.

2. Assign Situation Status staff and conduct training as needed.

B. During the emergency

1. Warning Phase

This phase could begin upon receipt of a warning, such as the forecast of a flood, fire, winds or tsunami. During the warning phase, review and update plans and procedures.

2. Impact Phase

Actions during this phase center around helping people impacted by an event such as an earthquake, a flood, a toxic spill, etc.

Use the Response Checklists to guide response efforts, and if more detail is needed, refer to this narrative and to other supporting documents.

C. After (Recovery)

This period can begin before response actions are complete, and can continue long after the impact phase is over.

III. GATHERING INFORMATION

A. Ground Surveys

Ground surveys are the usual means of gathering damage information. Such surveys should observe and report damage, casualties, the status of risk areas and key facilities, and any other facts that will help guide response decisions.

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Whenever possible, supplement visual surveys with photographs or video recordings. If possible, broadcast live video to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

B. Aerial Surveys

Aerial surveys are primarily conducted by the County and with private industry. They are a great help to the emergency response effort and are particularly important if no one has heard from an area where damage is suspected.

C. From other agencies

Work with other Sections and Communications to get information from other agencies, both private and volunteer.

D. In the Emergency Operations Center

Remind Section Chiefs to prepare phone message forms for all phone messages (in and out) since you will need this information for Situation Status and for reports.

Review copies of message forms for information on conditions and damage assessment. Look for information which may impact a number of services, activities, or geographical areas. Use this information to prepare Flash Reports, situation reports and damage assessments.

Periodically, poll the Section Chiefs in the Emergency Operations Center for information regarding the current situation. This is an important source of information for the situation report. If conditions require, the poll may be as frequent as every 15 minutes.

VI. COMMUNICATING INFORMATION

A. Displays

1. Wall Map

The Situation Status staff will coordinate the wall map. The map should present, in a coordinated manner, information needed by the Section Chiefs in the EOC.

2. Bulletin Board

Maintain a bulletin board of significant events. Post information that the Section Chiefs in the Emergency Operations Center will use. Include the Incident Action Plan significant events, conditions, and major problems which have been solved, and significant events noted in Flash Reports.

B. Reports

Important information should be relayed as soon as it is obtained. If possible, give a verbal report quickly and then follow up in writing. Reports can take a variety of forms.

1. Flash Reports

Flash Reports are verbal reports, directed to the Director of Emergency Services. This information may then be announced to the Emergency Operations Center personnel. The Flash Report should summarize information which would impact a number of services or activities or which would impact impending decisions. This could include events and the areas potentially affected by those events. Include events such as toxic spills, gas leaks, downed power lines, loss of water pressure, fires, damaged transportation facilities, condition of communications, areas requiring evacuation or medical response, significant events or actions regarding the cities, etc.

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The Flash Report may also summarize an overview of conditions and indicate trends of events.

2. Briefings

The initial situation briefing by the Director of Emergency Services is probably the most important. If requested, gather information for this briefing and answer questions during the briefing.

3. Situation Reports

Situation Reports are the first written reports. Situation Status staff prepares these reports, which define affected areas, identify closed roads and highways, estimate number of casualties and include other essential information.

The report is prepared for the Director of Emergency Services with a copy for the County Office of Emergency Services. The Public Information Officer should also receive a copy of the report.

The Situation Status staff uses the Situation Report form to generate a report every two hours, or as requested.