

 Oregon Department of Emergency Management POLICY: OEM Tribal Relations	102-04-01
Owner: OEM Strategic Communications & Partnerships Manager	Version: 001
Approved By: Erin McMahon, OEM Director 	Effective Date: 7/24/2026

PURPOSE

This policy affirms the Oregon Department of Emergency Management’s (OEM) commitment to meaningful engagement with the Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon (“Tribal nations”) in the development and implementation of OEM programs that may affect Tribal interests or Tribal lands.

SCOPE

Tribal relations are a core component of OEM’s broader government relations strategy. This policy applies to all OEM staff, divisions, programs, and activities, and establishes a consistent framework for respectful engagement and collaboration with Tribal nations. It affirms OEM’s commitment to including Tribal nations in decision making, initiatives, and partnerships to the fullest extent allowed by state and federal law. The policy addresses both steady-state operations and emergency activations.

To support Tribal sovereignty and self-determination, OEM will ensure Tribal nations have access to relevant state and federal program information, are included in beneficial emergency management activities, and are provided with technical assistance to improve access to OEM and other resources.

These roles and responsibilities aim to strengthen the partnership between OEM and the nine tribes in Oregon by fostering collaboration, enhancing emergency preparedness, and ensuring that tribal needs are equitably included in emergency management efforts. Regular evaluation and adaptation of these roles will be essential to effectively meet the evolving needs of Tribal communities.

AUTHORITY

[ORS 182.164](#) State Agencies to Develop and Implement Policy on Relationship with Tribes

[ORS 182.162](#) to [182.168](#) establishes a "government-to-government" relationship between Oregon and each of the nine Federally Recognized Tribes within its borders, signifying Oregon's commitment to interacting with Tribal nations as distinct sovereign entities.

The United States government has a unique legal relationship with American Indian Tribal nations, as outlined in the United States Constitution, treaties, statutes, federal court decisions, and executive orders. This relationship is based on the trust agreement that Tribal nations have with the federal government.

See **Appendix A** for Tribal Legislation, Policy and Doctrine.

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REFERENCES

OEM Training Plan

OEM Tribal Liaison Position Description

[Attorney General's Public Records and Meetings Manual](#)

[OEM Regional Coordinator Map](#)

[State of Oregon Emergency Operations Plan](#)

[Annual Reports to Legislative Commission on Indian Services \(LCIS\)](#)

IMPACTED PARTIES

- Federally Recognized Tribes in Oregon
- Oregon Department of Emergency Management Staff
- Oregon State Legislature's Commission on Indian Services (LCIS)
- Other State Agency Tribal Liaisons and Tribal Community Based Organizations
- County, Tribal, and Local Governments

DEFINITIONS

Consultation: Consultation is a structured, focused, two-way interaction addressing a specific topic at a specific time. It involves the timely, transparent exchange of information and perspectives among parties, with the goal of fostering mutual understanding and enabling collaborative, informed decision making. Consultation is a core component of deliberative governance, aimed at achieving consensus and producing more equitable and effective outcomes.

Emergency Activation: When an emergency is anticipated to, or exceeds the capabilities of an impacted jurisdiction, and requires the resources or technical assistance from multiple state agencies, the State Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) may be activated. When activated, the State ECC serves as the single point of contact for coordinating an integrated state response to provide necessary resources and technical assistance to support incident stabilization and transition to recovery.

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Engagement: Refers to the agency's commitment to building and maintaining a nation-to-nation relationship with federally recognized Indian Tribal governments, acknowledging their sovereignty and self-governance. This involves consultation, collaboration, and communication to ensure that OEM policies and programs address Tribal needs and priorities, particularly in preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery, protection and prevention¹.

Federally Recognized Tribes (referred to as “Tribal nations” in this policy): Indian tribe means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act ([43 U.S.C. Chapter 33](#)), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians ([25 U.S.C. 450b\(e\)](#)). See the annually published Bureau of Indian Affairs list of Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services. (Congress, 2025)

- There are nine (9) Federally Recognized Tribes in Oregon:
 - Burns Paiute Tribe (BPT)
 - Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI)
 - Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon (CTGR)
 - Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon (CTSI)
 - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)
 - Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWS)
 - Coquille Indian Tribe (CIT)
 - Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians (CCBUTI)
 - The Klamath Tribes

OEM Staff: All employees, trainees, volunteers, consultants, contractors, and subcontractors at OEM.

Tribal Government Leader: The elected or appointed person or persons who are the highest executive, legislative, legal, or political authority within a specific Tribal nation and who are empowered to represent that Tribal nation in relations with other governments. Examples of titles used include, but are not limited to, chief, council chairperson, president, and chief executive.

Tribal Resolution: The formal way the Tribal government expresses its legislative will via its organic documents. In the absence of such organic documents, a written expression adopted under Tribal practices will be acceptable ([24 CFR 1003.4](#)).

¹ See also https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_tribal-consultation-policy-instructions.pdf

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Tribal Sovereignty: The inherent authority of federally recognized Tribal nations to govern themselves within the United States' borders. This sovereignty is affirmed by the U.S. Constitution, treaties, federal statutes, executive orders, and judicial decisions, recognizing Tribal nations as distinct, self-governing political entities with jurisdiction over their lands, resources, and people.

REQUIRED TRAINING

In accordance with [ORS 182.166](#), and due to the nature of OEM's work, all OEM employees are required to complete training by the Oregon Executive Branch within one year of hire. This training reinforces OEM's commitment to respectful, informed, and effective Tribal relations.

In lieu of DAS-led training, Oregon State Legislature's Commission on Indian Services (LCIS) recommends the following Oregon Department of Education training modules on Workday:

- ODE - Modules 1-5 - SB 13 Tribal History / Shared History Online Professional Development Course

OEM employees whose position includes engaging with Tribal nations directly must connect with OEM Tribal Liaison prior to engagement.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

OEM Director

- Represents the Governor and the executive branch in relations with Tribal government leaders on matters related to emergency management or OEM.
- Assures all OEM staff, contractors, and volunteers adhere to this policy.
- Designates an OEM Tribal Liaison. The minimum requirements to serve as the OEM Tribal Liaison are outlined in the OEM Training Plan and the OEM Tribal Liaison position description.
- Provides the annual Tribal Consultation Report to the Governor (see [ORS 182.166\(3\)](#)) and ensures that the report is publicly available (see Annual Reports to Legislative Commission on Indian Services (LCIS) in REFERENCES).

OEM Strategic Communications Manager

- Supervises implementation of this policy.
- Supports the OEM Tribal Liaison in developing and implementing the OEM Tribal Relations program.
- Serves as secondary back-up to the Tribal Liaison in the event of absence.
- Provides leadership and management to the OEM Tribal Liaison and ensures OEM Tribal relations are integrated with OEM's relations with federal, state, and local governments and other external partners.

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OEM Tribal Liaison

- Advises the OEM Director in support of OEM’s mission and work on OEM’s relations and efforts relating to Tribal affairs. Serves in OEM’s Strategic Communications and Partnerships (SCP) Section, reporting to the SCP section manager.
- Promotes cultural sensitivity within the ECC staff and ensures that tribal perspectives are considered in decision making.
- Ensures secure communication methods for sensitive Tribal information sharing.
- When possible, and as determined by the OEM director, participates in all meetings and calls between the OEM director and Tribal government leaders, serving as staff support to the OEM director.
- Establishes OEM’s relationships with Tribal nations and Tribal officials and staff as the primary point of contact.
- Maintains internal OEM situational awareness on efforts that affect Tribal nations.
- Identifies needs and preferences in collaboration and engagement with each Tribal nation.
- Assists with facilitating joint exercises with tribes to improve coordination and response capabilities
- Maintains documentation that outlines OEM’s Tribal relations strategy and guidance (e.g., policies, procedures, communication plans).
- Provides training to OEM employees on established engagement strategies and best practices in working with Tribal nations.
- Prepares and shares updates with Tribal nations on OEM activities.
- Creates a feedback mechanism for tribes to voice concerns or suggestions to OEM regarding emergency management practices.
- During Activations:
 - Advises the ECC Manager and OEM Director on Tribal affairs to support OEM’s mission and operations and ensure that related actions and communications are accurately documented in ECC records and processes. Participates in ECC operations during incidents, providing tribal perspectives and ensuring tribal concerns are addressed.
 - Provides regular updates to ECC leadership on tribal engagement efforts and concerns.
 - Develops Tribal communication plan during ECC activations that includes regular check ins with Tribal leadership and RC coverage plan when Tribal Liaison will not be available.

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- Assesses the potential impact of the emergency on tribal communities in Oregon. This includes understanding which tribes may be affected and the specific needs they may have during the incident.
- When activated as the ECC Tribal Liaison, serves as the point of contact for affected tribes during emergencies. Coordinates information sharing between the ECC and tribal governments to identify issues of importance and facilitate requests for assistance.
- Collaborates with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure a unified response to emergencies affecting tribes.
- Facilitates/Ensures the inclusion of tribal representatives in emergency response meetings and planning sessions.
- Conducts a debriefing/AAR with tribal representatives after an incident to evaluate the effectiveness of the response and identify areas for OEM improvement.

OEM Chief Resilience Officer

- Secondary support and assistance for OEM Tribal Liaison in developing, implementing and maintaining OEM Tribal Relations program.
- Serves as primary back-up to the Tribal Liaison in the event of absence during steady state operations.

OEM Regional Emergency Management Coordinator (REMC)

- Supports the OEM Director, Tribal Liaison, ECC and OEM staff in maintaining relationships with Tribal nations and Tribal officials and staff (see OEM Regional Coordinators Map in REFERENCES).
- May be identified as the primary emergency management level point of contact with specific individual Tribal nations, upon request of the Tribe, and in coordination with the OEM Director and OEM Tribal Liaison.
- May coordinate resource sharing during emergencies, ensuring that Tribal needs are equitably met.
- Facilitates engagement among local and Tribal partners with the goal that local incident updates are also being provided to the Tribes.
- Includes Tribal representatives in regularly scheduled meetings to discuss emergency management issues, concerns, and situational updates.
- Assists Tribes in accessing state and federal emergency management resources, grants, and training opportunities.
- Helps ensure the inclusion of Tribal perspectives in regional risk assessments and planning efforts.
- Provides timely ongoing situational updates and consults with the OEM Tribal Liaison.

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- When requested by a Tribal nation:
 - Assists Tribal emergency management with entering resource requests. May also assist when requested with gathering and entering lifeline situational updates and reporting.
 - Provides in-person Emergency Operations Center (EOC) technical guidance and assistance.
 - Works with tribes to develop and refine emergency response and preparedness plans that are culturally relevant and specifically tailored to the needs of each tribal community.
 - Helps ensure that Tribal emergency management plans are integrated into regional and state emergency management plans to include integrated preparedness work plans.
 - Assists in facilitating exercises and drills to enhance coordination and readiness among Tribal and state emergency management entities.

ECC Liaison Officer

- This position does not alter the need for the OEM Director and OEM Tribal Liaison to be directly involved as otherwise described in this policy.
- Inform the OEM Tribal Liaison of all communications with Tribal nations as soon as reasonable.

OEM Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) Manager

- During an ECC Activation, at level 3, 2, or 1:
 - Will decide to activate the ECC Tribal Liaison position as required.
 - Ensures that emergency management strategies are culturally sensitive and appropriate.
 - With the assistance of the Tribal Liaison and REMC's ensures the ECC works collaboratively with Tribal governments to integrate their needs, resources, and capabilities into the state's emergency management operations.
 - Ensures ECC staff provide access to state and federal resources for Tribal nations during emergencies, ensuring that they receive necessary support for preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts.
 - Helps advocate for ECC policies and procedures that recognize and address the specific needs of Tribal nations in OEM emergency management frameworks, including issues related to sovereignty and jurisdiction.
 - Coordinates through Tribal Liaison and REMC's ensuring that data and information related to emergencies is shared with tribal nations in a timely manner, while respecting confidentiality and security protocols.

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All OEM Staff

- Informs the OEM Tribal Liaison or designated back up on all interactions with Tribal nations and all work such as grant administration and other state government activities relating to Tribal nations.
- Reads and adheres to this policy.

POLICY BODY

OEM recognizes and respects each Tribal nation’s sovereignty and right to self-determination. In alignment with each Tribal nation's unique needs, OEM is dedicated to fostering collaboration, providing emergency management support, and offering training opportunities that enhance Tribal resilience and preparedness. The principles of engagement are to honor cultural practices, integrate traditional knowledge, build and sustain trust, customize emergency services, meet legal obligations, and support long-term resilience.

I. Steady State Operations

In steady-state², OEM maintains and implements Tribal relations policies, communication plans, and agreements—developed in close coordination with Tribal emergency managers—to ensure cultural relevance, mutual benefit, and respect for Tribal sovereignty. Key tools include the OEM Tribal Relations Policy, individual Tribal communication plans, the Oregon Resource Coordination Assistance Agreement (ORCAA), and targeted communications and consultation with designated Tribal contacts.

II. Emergency Activations

During emergency activations or emergency incidents OEM will provide timely notice of incidents impacting Tribal lands and interests and immediately brief Tribal emergency managers as needed. OEM may also offer technical assistance on federal disaster declarations³, FEMA compliance strategies, and resource requests such as damage assessments and post-disaster services.

III. Relational Tenets

Appropriate engagement is essential to establishing and maintaining trust with each Tribal nation. Using Tribal Sovereignty as a basis for government-to-government relations with the Tribal nations during both steady state and emergency activations, OEM strives to establish, maintain, and strengthen relationships with the Tribal nations in alignment with each Tribal nation's needs and preferences and following base relational tenets. OEM shall honor that:

² The activation level that describes routine monitoring of jurisdictional situation (no event or incident anticipated) (<https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/icsresource/assets/glossary%20of%20related%20terms.pdf>).

³ https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_tribal-declarations-interim-guidance_2024.pdf

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- a. A Tribal government leader is the head of a sovereign nation, equal in diplomatic rank to other sovereign representatives such as the U.S. President, U.S. Congress, U.S. Supreme Court, and monarchs, presidents, and prime ministers of other nation-states. As such, when OEM communicates or interacts with a Tribal government leader, it should be done by the OEM director, acting in the name of the Governor of Oregon, and acknowledging that the Tribal nation is independent of the State of Oregon or any of Oregon's constituent bodies or local governments.
- b. Unless otherwise requested by a specific Tribal nation or as part of a forum organized by two or more Tribal nations, or as part of a statutorily established council or committee, OEM shall communicate with each Tribal nation individually.
- c. Unless otherwise requested by a specific Tribal nation, OEM shall not communicate to the public, to federal or state agencies, nor to any other partners on behalf of a Tribal nation.
- d. OEM shall not initiate or support any activity on Tribal lands held in trust or lands owned by a Tribal nation without that Tribal nation inviting or explicitly allowing OEM to do so.
- e. OEM respects Tribal nations' sovereign right to work directly with federal agencies, in keeping with the federal government's tribal trust and treaty obligations. We remain a supportive partner, offering collaboration when requested while honoring Tribal self-determination.

IV. Individual Tribal nation Communication Plans

Individual Tribal Communication Plans, written by each individual Tribal nation, will detail the mutually agreed upon set of expectations and processes for consultation and engagement for both steady-state and emergency periods. OEM will maintain and update Tribal Communication Plans through annual reviews with individual Tribal nations.

V. Policy Maintenance

OEM is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of processes and responsibilities outlined in this policy. Reviews of this policy will be conducted annually or as requested by the Tribal nations or state leadership.

VI. Disclaimer

- a. In executing this policy, no party waives any rights, including treaty rights, immunities, sovereign immunities, or jurisdictions. This policy does not diminish any rights or protections afforded to any other Tribal persons or entities under State or Federal law.
- b. Through this policy, the parties aim to strengthen their collective ability to successfully resolve issues of mutual concern. While the relationship described by this policy provides an increased ability to solve problems, it likely will not fix all issues. Therefore, inherent in their relationship is the right of each party to elevate the issue of importance to any decision-making authority of another party, including, where appropriate, that party's Executive Office.

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VII. Exceptions

- a. Exceptions to this policy may be considered only when there is documented agreement between OEM and a specific Tribal nation.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date of Change	Changed By	
001	7/24/2026	Sophi Beym, OEM Tribal Liaison	Policy Developed

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Appendix A

Tribal Legislation, Policy, and Doctrine

Legislation

- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended, 42 United States Code (U.S.C. 5121-5207)
- Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Emergency Management and Assistance
- Title 2 CFR. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements
- Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296, as amended, 6 U.S.C. 101 et seq.)
- Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (PKEMRA) (Public Law 109-295)
- Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254)
- [ORS 182.162](#) through [182.168](#)

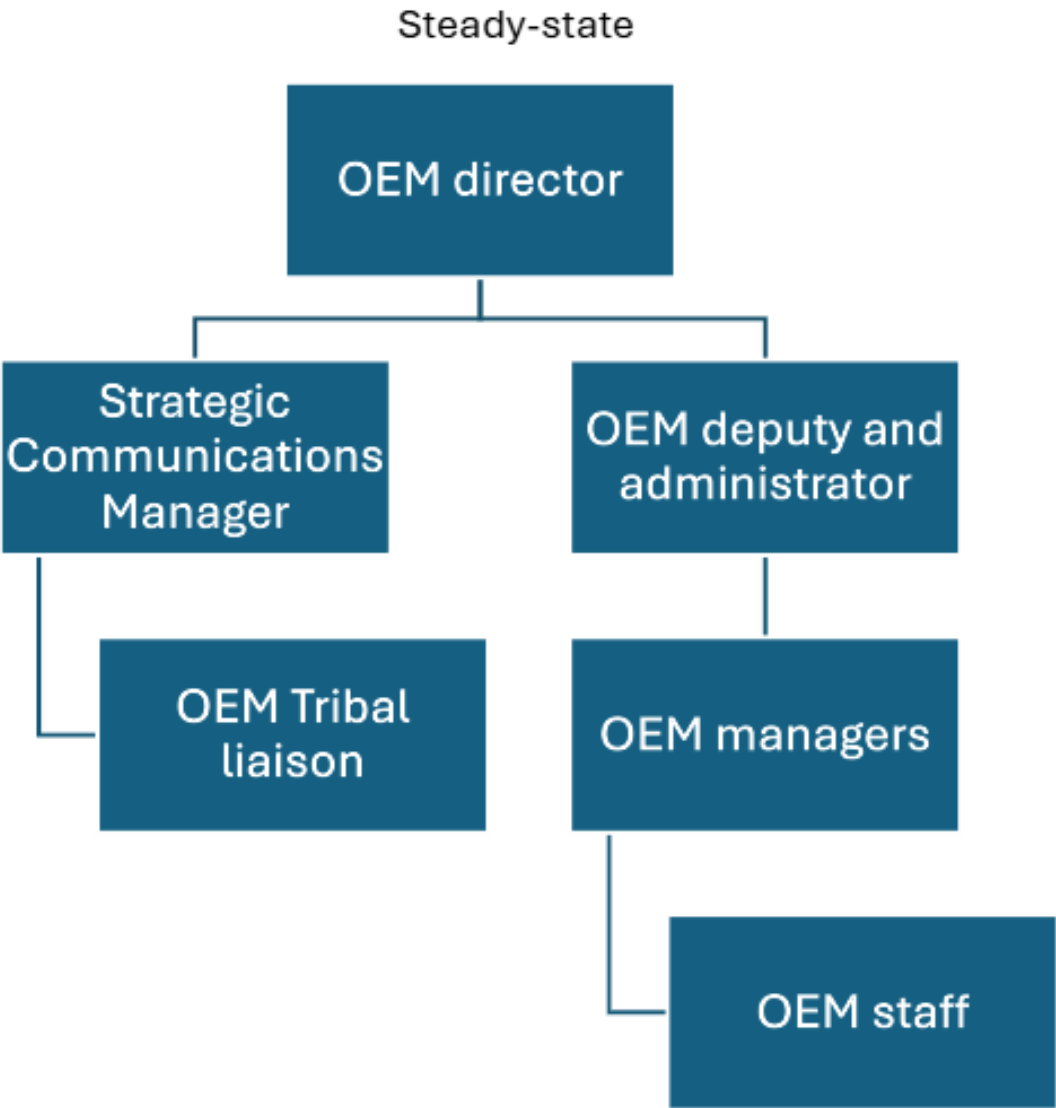
Policy

- Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (November 2000)
- Executive Order 14112, Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal nations to Better Embrace Our Trust Responsibilities and Promote the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination, December 2023.
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), Management of Domestic Incidents (2003)
- Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8), National Preparedness (March 2011)
- Presidential Policy Directive 44 (PPD-4) (November 2016)

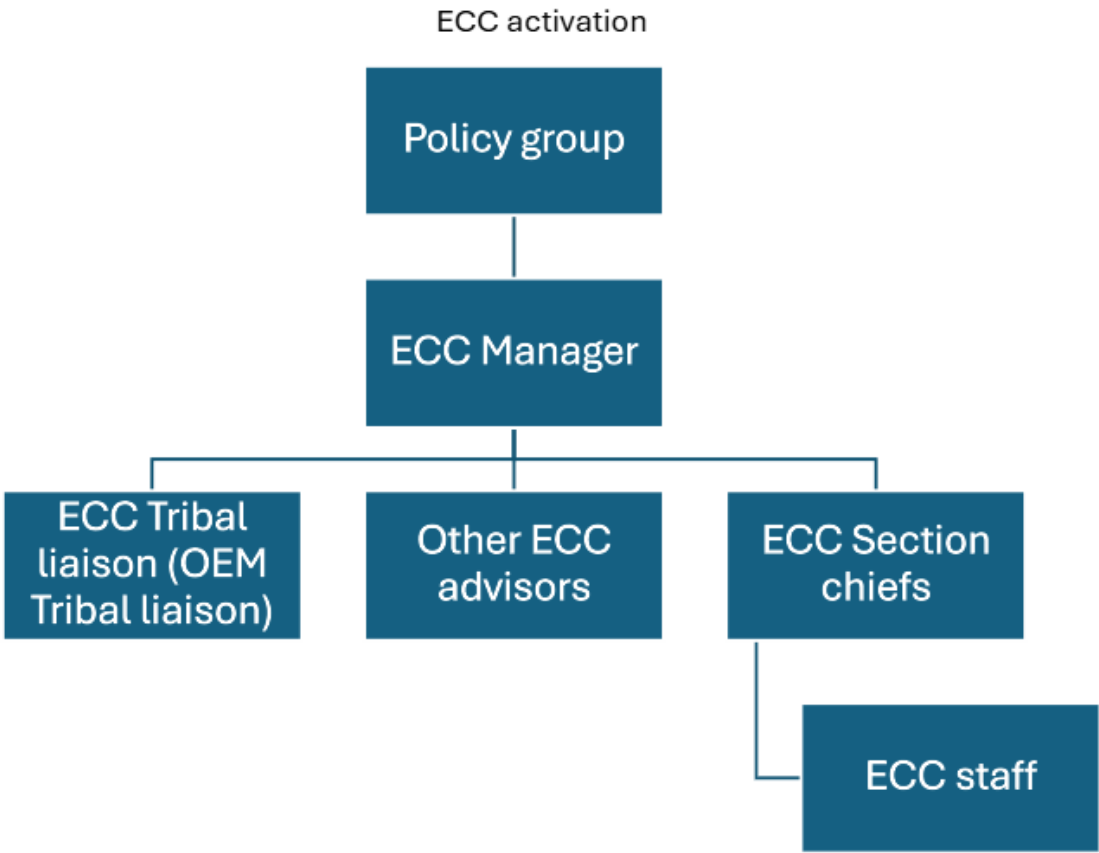
Doctrine

- National Preparedness Goal, September 2015
- National Planning System, February 2016
- National Disaster Recovery Framework, June 2016
- National Prevention Framework, June 2016
- National Protection Framework, June 2016
- National Mitigation Framework, June 2016
- National Incident Management System (NIMS), October 2017
- National Response Framework, October 2019
- National Preparedness System, July 2020
- Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101, September 2021
- FEMA Disaster Operations Keystone, 2023 (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2024, pp. 48-53)

Appendix B
OEM Steady-State Organizational Chart



Appendix C
OEM ECC Activation Organizational Chart



Appendix D
Response Operational Status Levels



RESPONSE OPERATIONAL STATUS LEVELS

