



# Ready<sup>®</sup>Responder

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.

Emergency Planning for First Responders and Their Families

[ready.gov/responder](https://ready.gov/responder)



**FEMA**

The Ready Responder program was collaboratively developed in partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Infrastructure Protection, National Protection and Preparedness Directorate, and FEMA.



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## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN WITH GUIDANCE

The Organizational Preparedness Plan (OPP) was structured using the format established in FEMA's *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101: Developing and Maintaining State, Territorial, Tribal, and Local Government Emergency Plans*, March 2009. Long-time emergency management practitioners will also recognize the influence of the *Civil Preparedness Guide 1-8, Guide for the Development of State and Local Emergency Operations Plans*, and the *State and Local Guide (SLG) 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning*. Certain CPG 101 sections were not used because they did not immediately apply to the intent of the plan.

This plan should be used by each of these response agencies, as well as those who may play a key prevention, response, and recovery operations role in disasters.

This template was developed to assist emergency response personnel and agencies go through a planning process to prepare themselves, their family members, and their agencies for catastrophic incident response. However, the plan should be scalable to meet day-to-day needs and flexible enough to be used by planners in different ways, including the following:

It is comprehensive and covers an array of preparedness-related issues that first responders and emergency planners may consider when developing a full, stand-alone organizational preparedness plan.

First responders and emergency planners can use applicable sections of this plan as they relate to agency or organizational needs and operational requirements.

This template follows the traditional CPG 101 plan format. Please note that this template contains guidance language and sample language that can be discarded or used in part or in whole at the discretion of the agency. **Bold text** is guidance information and regular text is sample language. Guidance information should be deleted before finalizing your OPP, and sample language should be modified to reflect your agency. All underlined text in parentheses must be replaced with agency-specific input, such as the name of your agency, your units, sections, or bureaus involved in the planning process.



## PROMULGATION STATEMENT

The promulgation statement enters the plan “in force.” Promulgation is the process that officially announces/declares a plan. It gives the plan official status and provides agencies with both the authority and the responsibility to perform their tasks. It should also mention the responsibilities of tasked entities, such as units, sections, or bureaus, with regard to preparing and maintaining standard operating procedures and should commit those agencies to carry out the training, exercises, and plan maintenance needed to support the plan. The promulgation statement also allows the chief official or agency leadership to affirm their support for organizational preparedness. The following is sample language.

(Name of Chief Official)

(Title)

(Name of Agency)

(Name of Agency) Organizational Preparedness Plan

The (Name of Agency) Organizational Preparedness Plan provides a comprehensive framework for organizational and/or agency-wide preparedness efforts taken to better prepare first responders for disaster. It is recognized that the preparedness of first responders and their families is an important element to the organization’s level of preparedness.

The (Name of Agency) First Responder Organizational Preparedness Plan ensures consistency with current policy guidance and describes the interrelationship with other departments and/or agencies. The plan will continue to evolve, responding to lessons learned from actual disaster and emergency experiences, ongoing planning efforts, training and exercise activities, and guidance.

Therefore, in recognition of the emergency responsibilities of (Name of Agency) and with the authority vested in me as the Chief Officer of (Name of Agency), I hereby promulgate the (Name of Agency) First Responder Organizational Preparedness Plan.

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(Name)

(Title), (Name of Agency)

## APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

**The approval and implementation page introduces the plan and outlines its applicability. It should include a date and must be signed by the chief official and/or agency lead. The following is sample language.**

The transfer of management authority for actions for organizational preparedness is done through the execution of a written delegation of authority. This procedure facilitates the transition between incident management levels. The delegation of authority is a part of the briefing package provided to an incoming incident management team. It should contain both the delegation of authority and specific limitations to that authority.

The (Name of Agency) Organizational Preparedness Plan delegates the (Chief Official)'s authority to specific individuals in the event that he or she is unavailable. The chain of succession in a major emergency or disaster is as follows:

(Position Title)

(Position Title)

(Position Title)

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Date

---

(Name)

(Senior Official Title), (Name of Agency)

## SIGNATURE PAGE

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(Name), (Title)  
(Assignment/Unit/Section/Bureau)



### RECORD OF DISTRIBUTION

Plan #	Office/Department	Representative	Signature
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## ORGANIZATIONAL PREPAREDNESS PLAN

### TEMPLATE WITH GUIDANCE

#### I. Purpose, Scope, and Planning Assumptions

**The Purpose section should describe the rationale and intention of the plan. The Scope section should describe to whom the plan applies. The Planning Assumptions section should include reasonable statements assumed to be true. The following is sample language.**

##### A. Purpose

1. It is the purpose of this plan to define the actions and roles necessary to provide an internally coordinated effort to improve first responder organizational preparedness within (Name of Agency).
2. This plan provides guidance to units, sections, or divisions within (Name of Agency) with a general concept of how to identify and implement a wide variety of organizational preparedness activities.

##### B. Scope

1. This plan applies to all participating units, sections, or divisions of the (Name of Agency).
2. The (Name of Agency) has (XX) employees who can provide functional skills in (fill in the functional capabilities of the agency).

**Consider listing the number of sworn personnel versus the number of civilian staff.**

3. During emergency operations, the (Name of Agency) has the following emergency responsibilities and operational objectives: (fill in responsibilities and objectives).

##### C. Planning Assumptions

1. An incident that affects (Name of Agency) is also likely to affect the surrounding community and region. Therefore, the (Name of Agency) should plan to manage operations with limited external resources for the first 72 hours, at a minimum.
2. Emergency incidents or disasters can occur at any time of the day or night, including weekends and holidays, often with little or no warning.
3. Research has indicated that a significant number of responders will likely not report to work if they are not confident of their family's safety. Individual/family preparedness planning before the disaster will

significantly increase the likelihood of first responders being available during a catastrophe.

4. Extended duty time periods will require staff to remain at work beyond normal assignments.

## II. Concept of Operations

**The Concept of Operations section describes the sequence of events that occur in order to facilitate organizational preparedness. A comprehensive organizational preparedness program consists of three interrelated phases: pre-incident, incident, and post-incident activities. Planners should take a systematic approach to planning a comprehensive responder and family preparedness program so that one phase complements the next. The following is sample language.**

The (Name of Agency) will approach preparedness comprehensively, understanding that activities occur in three phases: pre-incident, during an incident, and post-incident. These phases should be considered in advance of an incident and do not serve as reference points for when initial planning should occur on the topic.

### A. Pre-Incident:

**Includes plans, policies, and procedure development, training, and exercises conducted to save lives and to help response and rescue operations.**

1. Create a planning team with representation from necessary internal sections to oversee the organizational preparedness efforts.

**Identifying a group of individuals to discuss important policies and make recommendations to decision makers will enable informed choices to be made. This group should comprise major sections within the organization, such as executive leadership, planning, operations, training, finance, and human resources.**

**This group should meet regularly, be responsible for championing the effort, and have the support of the organization's leadership.**

2. Work with employees to develop an individual/family preparedness plan, prepare a ready kit, and become informed about those hazards that pose the greatest threat to their community.

- a. Become informed about the local community and its risk.

**Knowledge of the hazards that pose a risk to the area allows for informed decisions to be made about the individual/family preparedness plans, as well as what should be included in a ready kit. Different hazards have different risks. The impacts of a hurricane, earthquake, tornado, pandemic influenza, or nuclear event could all necessitate different supplies or plans because of the way they would affect the area.**

- b. Write an individual/family preparedness plan.

**An individual/family preparedness plan is a personalized action plan that lets each member of a household know what to do in particular disaster situations and how to be prepared in advance. A functional individual/family preparedness plan helps alleviate fears about potential disasters, makes actual disaster situations less stressful, and saves precious time in the face of disasters. This plan should include considerations for children, older adults or the elderly, those with access and functional needs, and pets.**

- c. Prepare a ready kit.

**Individuals and families should gather supplies necessary to sustain themselves for at least 72 hours after an event. This includes food, water, first aid supplies, radio/communications, and other resources needed to self-sustain.**

3. Encourage employees to champion preparedness in their local community.

**Plan for outreach into the community to encourage and empower residents to get involved. Such opportunities include creating Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), providing classes to community groups, or advertising events like Fire Prevention Week, Disaster Awareness Week, National Preparedness Month, National Fire Prevention Week, or Public Health Awareness, Outreach, and Preparedness events.**

**Reaching out to major nongovernmental organizations, including the faith-based community, has historically been effective at reaching a significant number of the local population.**

4. Incorporate preparedness education into department training and performance review activities.

**Incorporate training opportunities into regular annual employee training, get involved in local and regional exercises, and provide refresher training. Provide resources that empower staff members to take the initiative and develop individual/family preparedness plans.**

**The agency should consider how to maintain accountability for preparedness education. This could include requiring employees to sign affidavits affirming their preparedness activities or an organizational policy of including proof of a plan as one element of a regular performance metric. Executive leadership and Human Resources should also be consulted on issues related to evaluation of employees.**

5. Determine organizational shelter and feeding capability.

**Determine what level of shelter and feeding will be provided to responders during an event, and if that capacity can be extended to**

**include their families as well. This capability may not be housed within your organization, but instead may be provided collectively for the jurisdiction's first responders.**

**Information regarding the planned provision of shelter and feeding should be clearly communicated to responders to allow them to plan appropriately. If the provision of shelter or feeding is not internal or will not collectively be provided, consider arranging disaster agreements or a resource list for responders and their families to have should an event occur.**

6. Develop preventative prophylaxis policies for responders and their families.

**Identify policies for the administration of vaccinations and antibiotics to responders and their families. Coordinate with the local health department for information regarding mass vaccination/antibiotic dispensing during specific public health emergencies. Identify mission-essential staff or key personnel by your Continuity of Operations Plans. Arranging policies around those criteria may make those policies easier to enact.**

**This topic is sensitive and should not be completed without chief official/agency leadership and legal input.**

7. Determine evacuation needs.

**If an incident impacts an operational area for your agency, how will you move your personnel, where will they move to, and what support needs (logistics, transportation, resources, etc.) will you have?**

8. Outline shelter-in-place procedures.

**In some disasters, it may be safer to shelter in place. How this will occur and the procedures should be clearly outlined and accessible to employees.**

- B. During an Incident:

**This phase includes the mobilization of the necessary emergency services, first responders, and resources in the disaster area. This is likely to include a first wave of core emergency services, such as firefighters, police, and ambulance crews.**

1. Outline communication procedures with family members and responders.

**Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance how you will contact one another, how you will get back together, and what you will do in different situations. These Web sites provide resources to help create family communications plans.**

- a. <http://www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan/>

- b. <http://www.americanfamilysafety.com/kits/cart.php?target=communicationplan>
- c. [http://www.cityofpalmdale.org/departments/public\\_safety/fecp.html](http://www.cityofpalmdale.org/departments/public_safety/fecp.html)
- d. <http://safeandwell.communityos.org/>

2. Determine call-back (recall) procedures.

**Departments should have a primary and a backup system for informing their members about the status of operations during major incidents, including a system for recall. Hazardous weather, real or perceived danger, or threats to health can lead to hesitancy to report to work, and how to mitigate these issues must be considered. Communications with personnel can be carried out on several levels. Staff should be informed and trained on what the recall procedures are and how they will be implemented.**

**Call-back procedures occur regularly for operations-based disciplines, such as fire, law enforcement, emergency management, emergency medical services, and public works. However, the legal implications for other first response agencies must be considered. This policy needs to be vetted through chief officials, agency leadership, and the legal department before enacting.**

3. Outline employee leave policies and procedures.

**Every agency should have employee leave procedures in place. Your Human Resources department should have information available. If not, policies need to be enacted that determine how this issue will be handled during a catastrophic incident.**

4. Designate responder shelter and feeding locations.

**When planning for extended operations, departments need to consider shelter capacity and capability, food services, and basic supplies to maintain the personnel on duty. Optimally, shelter space should be located away from operational areas. Portable cots and blankets should be acquired and pre-deployed in designated shelter areas. These areas would ideally have back-up generators or the capability to receive power from one.**

**Consideration for policies on sheltering and feeding responder family members should also be discussed. Determinations based on such policies should be made during the pre-incident planning phase.**

5. Determine staffing needs.

**Emergency personnel needs will escalate during a catastrophe. A clear understanding of the agency's maximum capabilities and related staffing requirements will enable leadership to make decisions about shifts, rotations, and coordination during an incident.**

6. Provide on-going psychological support for employees.  
**During the incident, responders will likely be encountering situations that can cause emotional trauma. Provision for the delivery of psychological support to help mitigate the effects of emotional trauma and allow personnel to be better equipped to complete their tasks.**
7. Identify potential mutual aid needs and develop associated agreements.  
**The process of planning to obtain resources or personnel from other agencies is an important element of organizational preparedness. An incident may preclude an agency from fulfilling staffing needs; however, an equivalent capability in a neighboring jurisdiction could be accessed to fill the gap. Understanding what those shortfalls are allows for pre-incident agreements to be put in place.**
8. Determine incident-specific prophylaxis.  
**Identify policies for the administration of vaccinations and antibiotics to responders and families based on the effects of the incident. Coordinate with the local health department for information regarding mass vaccination/antibiotic dispensing during specific public health emergencies.**
9. Outline procurement procedures during a catastrophe.  
**Check with your local government and agency, or logistics and finance sections, to determine what your procurement procedures are and how to find additional information you may need to plan ahead for expenditures and/or procurement before, during, and after a disaster. These policies are often specifically designed to assist in the acquisition of equipment and services for response and recovery.**  
  
**The associated task of logistics with procurement needs to be considered here. How will the agency obtain the item, transport it, and maintain it?**

C. Post-Incident

**At the onset of an emergency, actions are taken to enhance the effectiveness of post-incident operations. This includes recovery that is both a short-term activity intended to return vital life-support systems to operation and a long-term activity designed to return infrastructure systems to pre-disaster conditions.**

1. Provide mental health and peer support services.  
**Mental health support may be of great benefit in the post-incident phase. Mental-health support planning should include internal behavioral health resources if available and public health or mental health officials. The following Web site contains information on mental health support.**

- a. <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/debriefing-after-disasters.asp>

### III. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

**The Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities section establishes the unit, sections, and bureaus that will be included in the planning process. This section also includes tasks that these units, sections, and bureaus are expected to perform. The following is sample language.**

#### A. General

Most units, sections, and bureaus of the (Name of Agency) have emergency functions in addition to their normal, day-to-day duties. These emergency functions usually parallel or complement normal functions. Each unit, section, and bureau is responsible for developing and maintaining its own emergency management procedures.

#### B. Organization

**The OPP should include the units, sections, or bureaus that should be typically involved in the planning process. The OPP should ensure that any unique organizational arrangements pertinent to the planning process are adequately described. The following are sample sections.**

1. Administration
2. Finance
3. Planning
4. Operations
5. Logistics
6. Training
7. Communications
8. Human Resources

#### C. Assignment of Responsibilities

**Primary and supporting planning responsibilities should be assigned to specific units, sections, or bureaus that have the capability to perform them. Coordination requirements should also be described. The following are sample responsibilities.**

1. Administration
  - a. Determine policy-level decisions on prophylaxis and employee recall and leave procedures.

- b. Initiate employee call-back.
  - c. Champion preparedness among personnel and their families.
  - d. Develop and maintain mutual aid and other agreements.
2. Finance
  - a. Provide proper forms for time keeping and financial records.
  - b. Provide payroll services.
  - c. Maintain appropriate documentation.
  - d. Conduct emergency procurement.
3. Planning
  - a. Oversee the organizational planning team.
  - b. Identify internal organizational gaps and collaborate to bring in appropriate units, sections, and bureaus to provide that information.
4. Operations
  - a. Develop internal organizational shelter, feeding, and evacuation plans for buildings and operational sites.
  - b. Oversee employee shelter and feeding operations.
5. Logistics
  - a. Assist in the reception, allocation, and distribution of personnel and supplies.
6. Training
  - a. Develop internal individual and family preparedness training sessions and open houses.
  - b. Identify internal preparedness gaps to offer specific training for units, sections, and bureaus.
  - c. Offer regular drills to test the organizational preparedness plan.
7. Communications
  - a. Implement the employee call-back decision.
  - b. Oversee internal communications.
8. Human Resources
  - a. Assist in the development of employee leave policies.
  - b. Serve as expert on employee rights and requirements during an incident.
  - c. Coordinate mental health resources.

#### IV. Communications

**This section describes communications protocols between various units, sections, or bureaus that may be assigned to handling internal communications. The following is sample language.**

Internal communications are covered under the (Name of Agency) communications plan.

#### V. Administration, Finance, and Logistics

**This section should describe administration, finance, and logistics policies that support the implementation of the plan. The following is sample language.**

##### A. General Policies

This section outlines general policies for administering resources, including the following:

##### 1. Finance

**Reference should be made to administrative requirements that are applicable to emergency operations (e.g., emergency purchasing procedures, payroll, etc.), which appear in other documents.**

##### 2. Records and Reports

**The plan should include requirements for tracking the source and use of resources and expenditures. Specific forms that are necessary should be attached to this plan and mentioned in this section. Additionally, any authorities that guide the execution of this process should be listed in the Authorities and References section.**

##### 3. Agreements and Understandings

**This section references any mutual aid agreements or emergency response and recovery contracts that exist. It also indicates who is authorized to activate those agreements or contracts.**

##### a. Agreements

**Agreements with outside agencies provide immediate aid to disaster victims and provide some types of services that the government is unable to render.**

b. Understandings

**Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with adjoining agencies recognize that certain situations require effective coordination and cooperation between jurisdictions to achieve effective response and recovery and to provide for the general safety and health of residents. These documents formalize and focus attention on commitments and help avoid misunderstandings.**

VI. Plan Development and Maintenance

**This section should describe the overall approach to plan development and maintenance. The following is sample language.**

A. Update and Development

**Identify by position the individuals responsible for developing, revising, and approving the OPP.**

This plan will be maintained by (Position and Unit, Section, or Bureau). All edits or suggestions should be coordinated through this person. Changes to the document must be approved by (Chief Official or Agency Leader) before dispersal.

B. Maintenance

**The OPP is a living document. Problems emerge, situations change, gaps become apparent, and the OPP must be adapted to remain useful and up-to-date. Once planning documents are developed, a system of maintenance must be established to ensure they are current.**

The OPP should be reviewed (insert level of frequency), unless gaps are identified earlier through real world events or regular planning, training, or exercises.

VII. Authorities and References

**This section should describe the legal basis for the OPP and contain references to important documents the plan supports, such as the jurisdiction-level emergency plans. The following is sample language.**

A. Legal Authority

1. Federal

- a. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance, Public Law 93-288, as amended

2. State

**Insert State laws and guidance pertaining to first responder organizational preparedness.**

3. Local  
**Insert local laws and guidance pertaining to first responder organizational preparedness.**

B. References

1. Federal
  - a. Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101: Developing and Maintaining State, Territorial, Tribal, and Local Government Emergency Plans, March 2009.
  - b. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), February 2007.
  - c. National Incident Management System (NIMS), December 2008.
  - d. National Response Framework, Federal Emergency Management Agency, January 2008.
2. State
  - a. State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
3. Local
  - a. Local EOPs
  - b. Inter-local agreement(s)
4. Other
  - a. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1600, Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs, 2007.