



Monterey County COVID-19 / EOC Activation Improvement Plan

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Monterey County COVID-19 / EOC Activation Improvement Plan

Prepared for:
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Introduction

The County's EOC was activated for the COVID-19 crisis February 27, 2020. The purpose was to manage this fast-growing pandemic. As the year progressed, other incidents – wildfires and PSPS occurrences – took place. As of May 6, 2021, the EOC was still activated.

Tetra Tech was engaged to develop an Assessment Report (separate document) and Improvement Plan. Five focus areas were identified for the assessment process by County Office of Emergency Services (OES); they are listed below:

1. Operational Coordination
2. PIO Operations and Public Warning
3. Emergency Operations Center Functions
4. Management Operations (County and EOC)

As part of the assessment process, participants were identified; a survey was developed; interviews were scheduled; and documents were reviewed. The assessment process incorporated the five focus areas into the various aspects of the review.

The five focus areas became the five areas around which the Improvement Plan was developed.

This Improvement Plan was adapted from FEMA's HSEEP (Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program) guidance.

Summary

With the information, comments, suggestion, and feedback collected throughout the assessment process, Tetra Tech's Project Team constructed action items for each focus areas. Action items have been structured based on observed or experienced activities, policies, protocols, or events based on participant's feedback. The intent of the action item is designed to improve or enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency during emergencies, disasters, or sustained EOC operations.

Improvement Action Items

Below are listed suggested action items for each of the five focus areas. From the recommendation, OES will choose the most appropriate and relevant ones, identify the lead agency and point of contact, and select start and target completion dates. OES will oversee improvement coordination and maintenance of the Improvement Plan. OES will also play an instrumental role with assisting in the improvement activities.

Continuing the concept of "how can we do better" in the Assessment Report, the following recommendation are an extrapolation from findings in the Assessment Report. The recommendations are constructed as measurable objectives designed to improve or enhance operations and/or functionality.



OPERATIONAL COORDINATION				
Staff Coordinator:				
Recommended Action Item	Agency Responsible	Primary Point of Contact/ Subject Matter Expert	Start Date	Completion Date
1. Develop strategy and plan for using DSWs during major emergencies / disasters and establish work requirements; <i>suggestion:</i> establish, inform, and implement countywide DSW requirements and expectations during emergency and critical incidents; ensure compliance; make it part of new employee orientation				
2. EOC training for public health staff <i>suggestion:</i> establish a progressive training and exercise program for all staff especially new and untrained staff; document the trainings				
3. Ensure critical EOC positions are 3 deep; <i>suggestion:</i> develop a 2 or 3 team roster of teams (RED/BLUE or RED/WHITE/BLUE) of essential personnel for EOC staffing				
4. Update Pandemic Annex as needed; <i>suggestion:</i> based upon lessons learned from this activation, make necessary updates led by MCHD to pandemic annex				
5. Develop EOC protocols and procedures for remote work				



6. Determine role and location of Health DOC				
PIO OPERATIONS AND PUBLIC WARNING				
Staff Coordinator:				
Recommended Action Item	Agency Responsible	Primary Point of Contact/ Subject Matter Expert	Start Date	Completion Date
1. Employ Joint Information System (JIS) / Joint Information Center (JIC) – have messages be delivered by PIO and use fire official, public health officer, law enforcement as subject matter expert not primary spokesperson; <i>suggestion</i> : develop protocol for activating JIC/JIS				
2. Identify seasoned, experienced spokespersons for delivering information; <i>suggestion</i> : establish a pool of people who have good public presence and interact well with media				
3. Develop strategy and marketing campaign to get people enrolled in alerting/ notification system; <i>suggestion</i> : work with community organizations and groups throughout the county to assist; have staff with tablets at various locations during different times of years to enroll residents in alert system				
4. Co-develop countywide communications / PIO group; <i>suggestion</i> : designate PIO lead to				



<p>contact PIOs from various municipalities and special districts to meet regularly and collaborate on efforts and procedures; potentially include social media specialists</p>				
EOC FUNCTIONS				
Staff Coordinator:				
Recommended Action Item	Agency Responsible	Primary Point of Contact/ Subject Matter Expert	Start Date	Completion Date
<p>1. Review and ensure appropriate staff assigned to EOC positions; <i>suggestion:</i> regularly review staff assigned to EOC positions and determine the appropriate fit based on experience, knowledge, training, personality, and collegiality for emergency or disaster</p>				
<p>2. Establish minimum mandatory training requirements for EOC positions; ensure EOC staff has received appropriate training for position to which they are assigned; <i>suggestion:</i> determine minimum mandatory training and experience standards for each EOC position and ensure assigned person meets those standard; encourage additional training</p>				
<p>3. Develop, implement, or update a progressive multi-year training and exercise plan (MYTEP); <i>suggestion:</i></p>				



assign OES staff member to develop, monitor, and maintain a progressive plan in conjunction with other OES initiatives				
4. Develop improved acquisition process of needed supplies during emergencies; <i>suggestion</i> Logistics and Finance sections should work together to develop a plan and protocol for purchasing equipment and supplies during an emergency				
5. Increase OES staffing levels from current level; add additional personnel capable of carrying out the increase in OES responsibilities and can support EOC activations; <i>suggestion</i> : at minimum for EOC support – EOC Manager and deputy and staff to support each EOC Section				
6. Establish information briefing protocols for all EOC participants; <i>suggestion</i> : ensure that all staff are briefed at beginning of Op Period on goals and objectives; Section Chiefs should brief their section on any updates following Section Chiefs meetings				
7. Acquire “to go bags” ¹ for remote /at home workers with necessary equipment, resources, and supplies				

¹ To Go Bags may contain laptops, cables, power cord, flash drives with necessary EOC and FEMA forms, contact list, pens, paper, position descriptions, access codes, protocols, and procedures



8. Establish training and maintain records for EOC staff and assigned OES staff member to manage; <i>suggestion</i> : design or purchase database for maintaining training records; review records annually				
9. Revise communication procedure for dissemination of information from Section Chiefs meeting to Section staff members; <i>suggestion</i> : establish/improve the way in which information is distributed to the EOC section staff members so people stay informed				
10. Determine operational role of MCHD officer in EOC; <i>suggestion</i> : Health Officer should be present in EOC for health/medical primary or secondary incidents as the medical branch director in OPS Section; person should decide if additional support necessary such as Medical or Health DOC needs to be activated				
11. Conduct annual assessment of EOC operational capabilities and submit improvement recommendations to CAO; <i>suggestion</i> : review plans, protocols, trainings, exercises, technologies, layout, and capability enhancements and submit proposed changes to CAO for consideration. Additionally,				



develop an EOC improvement plan to identify physical improvements to including accessories, laptops, video monitors, etc. to supplement EOC operations				
MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS (COUNTY and EOC)				
Staff Coordinator:				
Recommended Action Item	Agency Responsible	Primary Point of Contact/ Subject Matter Expert	Start Date	Completion Date
1. Facilitate assessment to determine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOC efficiency in layout and configurations • EOC staffing needs • OES staffing needs • OES funding • OA EOC and its interaction with jurisdictions 				
2. Conduct annual relationship audit between OA and jurisdictions (municipalities and special districts); review and implement appropriate findings				
3. Conduct annual relationship review between OA and volunteer groups; review and implement appropriate findings				



Glossary

AFN	Access and Functional Needs
Cal OES	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
CAO	County Administrator Office / County Administrative Officer
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CDCR	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CDPH	California Department of Public Health
COOP	Continuity of Operation Plan
DOC	Department Operation Center
DPW	Department of Public Works
DSW	Disaster Service Worker
EAP	Emergency Action Plan (usually in the EOC)
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EMSA	Emergency Medical Services Authority (CA Health and Human Services Agency)
EOC	Emergency Operation Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HR	Human Resources
IAP	Incident Action Plan (usually in the field)
ICS	Incident Command System
IT	Information Technology
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
MCHD	Monterey County Health Department
MHOAC	Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator
MYTEP	Multiyear Training and Exercise Plan
NIMS	National Incident Management System
OA	Operational Area
OES	Office of Emergency Services
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric
PHO	Public Health Officer
PIO	Public Information Officer
POC	Point of Contact
PSPS	Public Safety Power Shutdown
SEMS	Standardize Emergency Management System
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (goals)
SME	Subject Matter Expert