

Emergency Operations: When Every Minute Counts

In a public health crisis, we must be ready to respond quickly and to scale. An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) brings highly trained experts together to respond faster, make better decisions, and manage resources most effectively.



Why it Matters

An EOC provides real-time, coordinated response to natural or manmade disasters, disease outbreaks, and other public health emergencies.



People:

Bringing together decision-makers, subject matter experts and emergency response professionals.



Process:

Using a common framework for managing emergencies, such as the CDC Incident Management System, allows organizations to work seamlessly together. Responders who understand the principles of incident management can “speak the same language” during an event.



Flexible:

Connecting decision-makers—whether they are physically located together or working virtually—with the latest information to help them make timely decisions and maintain situational awareness.

Why CDC?

For over 70 years, CDC has attracted the best scientists in the world to help combat diseases that may emerge anywhere in the world such as smallpox, Ebola, and Zika virus. In a major disaster or emergency, we activate CDC’s EOC to connect public health experts with skilled personnel who know how to effectively manage emergencies, to support state and local emergency responses.

Between responses, CDC’s emergency management program provides training and conducts exercises to improve CDC’s ability to respond rapidly and effectively to known (and unknown) public health threats.



U.S. Department of
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Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Center for Preparedness and Response

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Emergency Operations in Action

In the past 10 years, CDC has responded to infectious diseases from Ebola to polio to, most recently, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19); deadly foodborne outbreaks; cases of lung injury associated with e-cigarette product use; devastating earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis; and environmental catastrophes like oil spills and water contamination.



The CDC EOC is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year



Between September 2001 and March 2020, CDC activated its IMS for over 60 responses



The IMS has been activated continuously since December 2011, and, for the first time in its history, was activated for four concurrent public health emergencies in February and March 2016

During Emergencies, CDC:

- Rapidly deploys scientific experts
- Coordinates the delivery of supplies and equipment to the incident site
- Monitors response activities
- Provides resources (e.g., public health experts, technical guidance, and emergency supply shipments) to state and local public health departments
- Develops and disseminates crisis and risk communication messages that are timely, accurate, consistent, and actionable

