

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 effectively.



Why It Matters

[CDC's EOC](#) supports the real-time, coordinated response to emergencies, including natural and manmade disasters, disease outbreaks, and other public health threats.



People:

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



Process:

Using a common framework for managing emergencies, such as the [Incident Management System \(IMS\)](#), allows organizations to work together. Responders who understand the principles of incident management can "speak the same language" during an event.



Flexible:

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

Why CDC?

For over 75 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 and in support of state and local emergency responses.

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



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Emergency Operations in Action

In the past 10 years, CDC has responded to

- Infectious diseases, including Ebola, polio, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and monkeypox.
- Foodborne outbreaks.
- Cases of lung injury associated with e-cigarette product use.
- Natural disasters, including earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis.
- Environmental catastrophes like oil spills and water contamination.



CDC staffs the EOC 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



Since September 2001, CDC activated its IMS for nearly 65 responses.



CDC has kept the IMS activated continuously since December 2011. It was activated in 2022 for as many as five concurrent responses, including agency-wide, center-led, and program-led responses.

During Emergencies, CDC

- 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.

