

1.5.3 PLANNING FORMATS AND ALL-HAZARDS PLANNING**Emergency Operations Plan**

The specific emergency planning format used in a given organization depends on the nature of the organization and the organization's policy. The all-hazards approach has been adopted by FEMA and can be used in business and organizational plans as well as community plans. The approach provides for a basic emergency plan, or emergency operations plan (EOP), with functional annexes (such as emergency call lists) that apply to multiple emergency situations, and threat-specific annexes (such as procedures for bomb incidents). This approach recognizes that many planning requirements are similar regardless of whether an incident is a natural threat, a human threat, or an accident. For example, an evacuation plan is necessary for fires, bomb incidents, and hazmat spills.

FEMA has developed a number of hazard-specific planning considerations dealing with fire, hazmat incidents, floods and flash floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, severe winter storms, earthquakes, and technological emergencies (Broder, 2006; FEMA, 1993, 2010a). Bomb incidents, including bomb threats, actual or suspected improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and detonations or deflagrations should be addressed in an annex to the emergency plan. Specific information regarding these incidents can be found in Chapter 3.

An alternative planning approach involves developing stand-alone plans for each relevant emergency or contingency. A third approach can be some combination of the first two. Regardless of the format, the plan should be developed in the simplest way possible, with outlines of the specific responsibilities for those assigned to emergency response. This ensures an effective response to any extraordinary situation.

Two significant considerations arise in choosing a planning format. The first pertains to the dissemination of the plan. A plan is of little value if it is not readily available to those whom it affects. Therefore, the format should facilitate the distribution of the plan to all individuals and organizational elements with designated responsibilities under the plan. The second consideration involves the maintenance of the plan. To be effective, every emergency plan should be reviewed and updated regularly.

A formal audit of the plan should be conducted at least annually. In addition, the plan should be evaluated and modified as required after the following:

- each training drill
- each emergency
- changes in personnel or their responsibilities
- changes in the facility's physical design
- changes in policies or procedures

Emergency planning software and some off-the-shelf database programs can facilitate incorporating the changes into and disseminating the amended plan (ASIS, 2005; FEMA, 1993; NFPA, 2010). It is essential that all emergency plans are reviewed at least once a year, to ensure that all dynamic information, such as floor plans, contact numbers, key personnel, and key assets, are accurate.

The planning format directly affects the updating process. For example, if an organization uses the all-hazards approach, it is relatively simple to update and disseminate information common to multiple emergencies, such as emergency contact numbers. On the other hand, if an organization has chosen to publish a series of stand-alone plans, it will have to update every plan each time common points of contact or emergency numbers change (Broder, 2006; FEMA, 2010a).

Other Emergency Plans

An EOP developed with the all-hazards approach will address the preparedness and response aspects of business continuity. Mitigation strategies related to constructing or retrofitting facilities or otherwise reducing the impact of potential emergency events should be addressed in a separate mitigation plan.

Similarly, business resumption/recovery plans and continuity of operations plans should be separate from the organization's security operations plan (FEMA, 2010a; NFPA, 2010).

1.5.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Developing and implementing a plan to cope with possible emergencies is a time-consuming process. Software tools, especially those based on a relational database system, can significantly reduce the labor of capturing the necessary information. Emergency management consultants can also help ensure a complete plan. However, neither software nor consultants can reduce the need for responsible participation by the organization's management team in plan preparation. Management has to be directly involved in the identification and evaluation of the organizational assets as part of the plan development. This process will identify the key assets of the organization that need to be protected. Managers directly involved in day-to-day operations can make risk analysis more manageable.

The purpose of an emergency plan is to highlight the types of problems that decision makers and other key emergency management personnel will encounter and to require them to consider, in advance, how to react when an emergency develops (ASIS, 2005, 2009; NFPA, 2010).