



Sonoma County COVID-19 / EOC Activation Improvement Plan

July 2021



Sonoma County COVID-19 / EOC Activation Improvement Plan

Prepared for:
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Introduction

Sonoma County activated its EOC on March 1, 2020, to manage the growing pandemic (COVID-19) crisis. The number of cases continued to increase during the year. A substantial number of Sonoma County and cities and town staff members had been involved in managing, supporting, or assisting the response. As the year progressed additional incidents occurred which added to the complexity of the situation.

Tetra Tech was engaged to develop a COVID-19 EOC Activation Assessment Report (separate document) and Improvement Plan. Five focus areas were identified for the assessment process by Department of Emergency Management (DEM); they are listed below:

1. Operational Coordination
2. Public Information & warning
3. Emergency Operations Center functions
4. County COOP Operations
5. EOC & Health Services DOC Coordination

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.

This Improvement Plan is organized around the five focus areas in the Assessment Report. 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, DEM will choose the most appropriate and relevant ones, identify the lead agency and point of contact, and select start and target completion dates. DEM will oversee improvement coordination and maintenance of the Improvement Plan. DEM 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 recommendations 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 of EOC systems, procedures, and staff development.

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	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Chris Godley/Jeff DuVall	08/2021	03/2022
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 (MYTEP)	County of Sonoma – Department of Health Services	Ryan Dehart	08/21	On-going
3. Define roles and responsibilities of MHOAC in EOC – <i>suggestion:</i> develop job aid or position description for each position assigned to the EOC	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/2021	09/2021
4. 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	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	09/2021	On-going
5. Update Pandemic Annex as needed; <i>suggestion:</i> based upon lessons learned from this	County of Sonoma – Department of Health Services	Health Program Manager	TBD	



activation, make necessary updates led by HHS to pandemic annex				
6. Develop EOC protocols and procedures for remote work	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/2021	09/2021
7. Develop emergency purchasing protocols; <i>suggestion</i> : have finance and procurement staff work on procedures for purchasing and approving purchases during emergencies or disasters and develop vendor list. Develop pre-established purchase orders from vendor list.	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management/Auditor, Controller, Tax Collector/ General Services Purchasing Division	Jeff DuVall/ Signe Sugiyama	08/2021	09.2021
8. Determine role and location of Health DOC	County of Sonoma – Department of Health Services - PHP	Ryan Dehart		
9. Determine number of staff members needed to staff various positions so EOC isn't over staffed; <i>suggestion</i> : based on EAP and projected staffing needs, EOC Director should determine the staffing requirements of the EOC for a given operational period. Staffing can be asessed throughout operational period and increased or decreased. (Explain to extra staff the need for being at the EOC or find activity for them to assist with)	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	09/2021	On-going



10. Develop standards and procedures for Operational Area (OA) calls/interactions with municipalities and districts during EOC activation or emergency activity; <i>suggestion</i> : based on the current need, what and how is the best way to communicate with municipalities and districts? If it's push information only, can it be by email? If feedback or comments or check-in is needed, will conference call/virtual call work? If a jurisdiction has a need, is it being addressed by the OA?	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/2021	09/2021
11. Determine EOC leadership for some hazard-specific incidents / activation (this should be prescribed)	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Chris Godley/Jeff DuVall	08/2021	09/2021



PUBLIC INFORMATION & WARNING				
<i>Staff Coordinator:</i>				
Recommended Action Item	Agency Responsible	Primary Point of Contact/ Subject Matter Expert	Start Date	Completion Date
1. 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	County of Sonoma – CAO/Communications	Carly Cabrera	08/2021	On-going
2. 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	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Dr. Nancy Brown	08/2021	On-going
3. Co-develop countywide communications / PIO group; <i>suggestion:</i> designate PIO lead to contact PIOs from various municipalities and special districts to meet regularly and collaborate on efforts and procedures; potentially include social media specialists	County of Sonoma – CAO/Communications	Carly Cabrera	08/2021	On-going
4. Employ Joint Information System (JIS) / Joint Information Center (JIC) – have messages be delivered by PIO and use fire official, public	County of Sonoma – CAO/Communications	Carly Cabrera	08/2021	On-going



health officer, law enforcement as subject matter expert not primary spokesperson; <i>suggestion</i> : develop protocol for activating JIC/JIS				
5. Develop strategy for informing remote, vulnerable, and AFN populations; <i>suggestion</i> : work with various organizations and AFN groups to understand needs and have County AFN lead draft strategies to improve contact with these groups	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/2021	On-going



COUNTY COOP OPERATIONS				
Staff Coordinator:				
Recommended Action Item	Agency Responsible	Primary Point of Contact/ Subject Matter Expert	Start Date	Completion Date
1. Review and update COOP Plan; <i>suggestion:</i> establish timeline for updating COOP Plan that engages and includes departments and clearly establishes roles and responsibilities.	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	04/2022	
2. Work with department DSWs to delegate their regular job roles and responsibilities to others so that they can focus on the EOC activities.	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	04/2022	
3. Update and maintain County staff contact information list; <i>suggestion:</i> designate staff members responsible for maintaining updated staff roster with contact information; review roster at least once a year	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	04/22	
4. Develop review strategy timeline in EOC Operations and COOP Operations to determine if appropriate balance for division of county resources are being adequately utilized	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	04/22	



EOC FUNCTIONS				
Staff Coordinator:				
Recommended Action Item	Agency Responsible	Primary Point of Contact/ Subject Matter Expert	Start Date	Completion Date
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, collegiality, emergency, or disaster	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Chris Godley/Jeff DuVall	08/2021	On-going
2. Establish minimum training requirements for EOC positions; ensure EOC staff has received appropriate training for position to which they are assigned; <i>suggestion:</i> determine training and experience standards for each EOC position and ensure assigned person meets those standard; encourage additional training	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/2021	On-going
3. 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	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/2021	01/22
4. Establish information briefing protocols for all EOC participants; <i>suggestion:</i> ensure that all staff are briefed at beginning of Op	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/2021	10/21



Period on goals and objectives; Section Chiefs should brief their section on any updates following Section Chiefs meetings				
5. Acquire “to go” bags for remote /at home workers with necessary equipment, resources, and supplies	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/21	08/21
6. Establish training and maintain records for EOC staff and assigned DEM staff member to manage; <i>suggestion</i> : design or purchase database for maintaining training records; review records annually	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/21	08/21
7. Improve mapping systems by using ArcGIS online.	County of Sonoma – ISD	Kevin Lacefield	08/21	On-Going
8. Develop procedure for IT staff support in EOC; <i>suggestion</i> : determine when an IT Staff member needs to be present in the EOC	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/21	08/21
9. Develop, implement, or update multi-year training and exercise plan (MYTEP); <i>suggestion</i> : assign DEM staff member to develop, monitor, and maintain a progressive plan in conjunction with other DEM initiatives	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/21	08/21
10. 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	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/21	On-going



<p>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</p>				
<p>11. Develop strategy for managing sustained EOC operations while concurrently operating County departments and services; <i>suggestion</i>: CAO should assemble team to determine advanced planning strategy asking questions such as – potential length of response, do we envision transitioning from response to recovery within a determined time period, can we transition EOC activities and operations to a DOC? This may help determine staffing needs for other County functions and activities or what resources and services might be needed during the recovery phase. It may also assist with what outside resources might be needed to assist.</p>	<p>County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management</p>	<p>Chris Godley</p>		
<p>12. Develop DEM & EOC annual review process to determine adequate staffing, resources, efficiency, and effectiveness; <i>suggestion</i>: regularly review; implement improvements and changes</p>	<p>County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management</p>	<p>Jeff DuVall</p>	<p>08/21</p>	<p>On-going</p>



EOC & HEALTH SERVICES DOC COORDINATION

Staff Coordinator:

Recommended Action Item	Agency Responsible	Primary Point of Contact/ Subject Matter Expert	Start Date	Completion Date
1. Schedule Health Services EOC / ICS training and ensure compliance; <i>suggestion:</i> ensure that Health Services staff who participate in EOC function have received appropriate ICS training	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management	Jeff DuVall	08/21	On-going
2. Determine operational role of Health Services DOC and its relationship to Health Services presence in EOC; <i>suggestion:</i> decide whether health field operational direction should be managed from the EOC or DOC	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management & Department of Health Services - PHP	Jeff DuVall/ Ryan Dehart	08/21	On-going
3. Ensure cooperative and effective communication between EOC and Health Services during EOC activations for medical related incident; <i>suggestion:</i> make sure both DEM and Health Services staff work together to deliver appropriate care while following FEMA and Cal OES guidelines for potential reimbursement	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management & Department of Health Services - PHP	Jeff DuVall/ Ryan Dehart	08/21	On-going
4. Develop protocol for transitioning operational coordination of pandemic activities from EOC to Health Services DOC. <i>Suggestion:</i> following a determination that a full EOC is no longer necessary,	County of Sonoma – Department of Emergency Management & Department of Health Services - PHP	Chris Godley/Jeff DuVall/ Ryan Dehart	03/22	



draft procedure for moving control from the EOC to DOC while continuing to adhere to FEMA and Cal OES guidelines				
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Glossary

AFN	Access and Functional Needs
Cal OES	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
CAO	County Administrator Office
CDCR	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CDPH	California Department of Public Health
COOP	Continuity of Operation Plan
DEM	Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management
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
HEALTH SERVICES	Health and Human Services
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
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