

Recovery

Operations Guidance For Essential Service Centers

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I. Introduction

Essential Services Centers (ESC) are temporary, mass care emergency locations where impacted survivors of disasters can go for limited essential services and information within 24 to 96 hours following a disaster. ESCs are considered a joint operation between county, non-governmental organizations and the state. The primary responsibility for an ESC lies with the state, but each level of government has a role. This Plan identifies those limited circumstances where ESCs will be used to expedite the response and recovery process.

II. Mission / Scope

The mission of this Plan is to describe those circumstances when an ESC may be needed. This would come in the form of securing resources not readily available to the impacted county. In most likelihood, this would involve identifying those agencies (private and public) and resources available to support operations for a short period of time. .

III. Assumptions

- A. In the immediate aftermath of an event there may be a need to provide certain essential services that are not necessarily provide at other traditional mass care facilities, such as, shelters or county points of distribution.
- B. The combination of services provided will be dependent on the needs of the locally impacted community as determined jointly by the state and affected county.
- C. Counties and municipalities may have exhausted local resources and the emergency may have exceeded their response capabilities. Resource needs under these conditions may be required for an extended period of time.
- D. Mutual aid may be required to support operations.
- E. ESCs must be operational within the 24 - 96 hours following impact.
- F. The county will obtain a firm commitment for the use of a “fixed” site for at least 15 days, with an option to extend the use of each site for an additional 15 days.
- G. During a presidentially declared disaster, the ESC may transition into a FEMA operated Disaster Recovery Center.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

- A. State

1. The Division of Emergency Management's Bureau of Recovery will be responsible for managing all ESC operations. The Deputy SERT Chief will coordinate with other state agencies to determine survivor needs. ESC will be established at sites identified by the county emergency manager director and the Deputy SERT Chief.
2. The Department of Children and Families will provide personnel to provide information related to food stamp replacement and crisis counseling.
3. The Agency for Workforce Innovation will provide job placement and training referrals.
4. The Department of Elder Affairs will provide case managers to connect elderly to appropriate assistance.
5. The Department of Veterans Affairs will provide case managers to provide information on benefits, pensions, insurance settlements and VA mortgages.
6. The Division of Emergency Management, Bureau of Mitigation will provide information on the National Flood Insurance Program to mitigate against future losses. The Division's Bureau of Recovery will conduct a State Housing Survey to identify present housing needs in the affected area.
7. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will establish mobile facilities to provide replacement drivers licenses, identification cards, motor vehicle tag services, voter registration, organ donation designation and emergency contact registration.
8. The Department of Agriculture will provide information about loan programs to assist eligible farmers, ranchers, and aquaculture operators in returning their operation to a financially sound basis in the aftermath of a disaster.
9. The Department of Financial Services will provide information about federal and state assistance programs, including insurance awareness.

Note: State agencies assigned to an Essential Services Center will be dependent on the type of disaster and extent of damages.

B. Local Agencies

1. The County Department of Health will provide health safety information and water test kits
2. Local Utilities will provide information related to restoration of services.
3. Local building and permit office will provide information related to building and remodeling projects when permits are necessary
4. Local Community Emergency Response Teams will provide support in education for survivors on disaster preparedness within the impacted community

C. Volunteer Agencies

1. Long Term Recovery will provide assistance with intake and unmet need identification
2. Faith Based Organizations **may** provide vouchers for clothing, referrals and household items.
3. The American Red Cross **may** provide feeding and hydration, flood cleanup materials and gathering information on specific needs of the impacted community
4. The Salvation Army **may** provide food, water, sheltering, clothing, and assistance in replacement of household necessities

V. Concept of Operations

The ESC Manager shall request assistance from the Logistics Section to help secure needed assets to open an ESC before federal or local assets can be arranged. In those circumstances, the Logistics Section will take the request from the ESC Coordinator to ascertain the feasibility of securing resources.

When this request is made, the Logistics Section will determine what assets are available, where they would originate from, and estimated costs. This information will be forwarded to the State Logistics Chief, Human Services Branch Director and Recovery Section Chief. Concurrence for expending these funds would be granted by the Deputy SERT Chief for Recovery.

VI. Facilities

To every extent possible, fixed facilities such as community centers, union halls, lodges, gymnasiums, church community centers or other sites will be used. Proposed sites are typically located at well-known, easily recognized facilities that are in close proximity to the affected area.

Where no fixed facilities of adequate size or capability are available, then expedient field facilities will be developed based on pre-scripted packages under the ESC Plan to include large climate controlled tents, emergency power and lighting, folding tables and chairs, field IT network support to include wired or satellite services, and telephone service.

To ensure that a clear understanding for the use of the facility exist between the State and the facility owner and managers, direct and timely communication and coordination is critical. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Premise Use Agreement or other appropriate document arranging for the use of the facility will

be coordinated between the ESC Coordinator and the property owner or authorized agency.

Note: To every extent possible, facilities will meet ADA and Florida accessibility requirements.

VII. Services

At a minimum, there will be:

- A. Bulk distribution of emergency supplies based on verified emergency needs.
- B. Food and water.
- C. Temporary sanitation facilities.
- D. Public information regarding the availability of state, local, volunteer, non-governmental organizations and faith based programs.
- E. Telecommunications for the management of the facility (telephone and data).
- F. Tables and chairs.
- G. Generators.

VIII. Reporting Requirements

The Essential Service Center Coordinate will be responsible for filing a report with the SERT by 3:30 p.m. each day on the following:

- A. Number of survivors served by the facility each day.
- B. Amount of food and water (and any other items) distributed, including meals.
- C. Type of services or information provided at the facility.
- D. Changes in contact information (telephone numbers) at the facility.
- E. Unmet emergency needs identified.

VIX. Execution of ESC Premise Use Agreement

At the request of a county or the Deputy SERT Chief, a mission assignment will be generated by the Operations Section to establish an ESC. The Recovery Section, Individual Assistance Branch will be tasked by the Deputy SERT Chief to establish any and all ESCs. SERT Legal will edit the approved mission and post a draft copy of the ESC Premises Use Agreement. Before any ESC is fully functional, the state ESC Coordinator and the Owner of the facility will execute an "Essential Services Center Premises Use Agreement ("Agreement)". The

state ESC Coordinator shall ensure that the Agreement is executed by both the Division and the Owner of the facility. Once the Agreement is signed by both parties, the state ESC Coordinator shall scan a copy of the Agreement and post it in the mission assignment within EM Constellation. The ESC Coordinator shall forward the original to SERT Legal for public records preservation.

X. Closure of ESC

In accordance with the “ESC Premises Use Agreement,” when the county and Deputy SERT Chief determine that an ESC is no longer required, the ESC Coordinator shall provide notice to the Owner of the facility that the facility will be closed on a date prescribed in a letter. Notice shall be in the form of an “ESC Final Inspection” letter. SERT Legal will generate the document and post a draft copy of the letter in the designated EM Constellation mission. Once the letter is executed by both the Division and the Owner of the facility, the state ESC Coordinator shall scan a copy of the Agreement and post it in the mission assignment within EM Constellation. The ESC Coordinator shall forward the original to SERT Legal for public records preservation.

For further information on Essential Services Centers please contact:

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