

# **FORWARD SERT**

**Standard Operating Guidelines** 

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# **Delegation of Authorities**

The FSERT operates with the authority granted the SEOC under Florida Statute Chapter 252, with the following limitations:

- 1. Supplemental Orders: Once the Governor has issued an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency, the designated SCO has the authority to execute supplemental orders needed to support the public safety mission post disaster. Executive legal process may only be conducted at the SEOC.
- 2. While the FSERT operates with the full State authority under a FSERT Chief it should be noted that the FSERT is subordinate to the SCO through the SERT Chief.

# **Principle Mission**

The Forward State Emergency Response Team (FSERT) serves as the forward coordination element of the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) under the command of the FSERT Chief who will also be designated as a Deputy State Coordinating Officer. It operates as the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) under the coordination of the FSERT Chief within the predefined area of operation with full delegated authority to manage all missions and resources on behalf of the SERT. The FSERT provides resources and technical assistance in support of local tactical operations.

#### Goals to be achieved by the FSERT

The goal of the FSERT when deployed is to fully function as the SEOC for the defined <u>area of operations</u>. The following goals will be achieved:

- 1. Command and control of all SERT missions in the assigned area of operations.
- 2. Manage the prioritization, deployment, maintenance, and demobilization of resources.
- 3. Coordinate technical assistance and decision making among state, regional, and federal agencies and organizations in the assigned area of operation.
- 4. Maintain and communicate ongoing situational awareness among all partner organizations.
- 5. Coordinate information and activities at the highest levels with the SEOC.

#### **Objectives: Mission tasks of the FSERT**

- 1. Command and control
  - a. Provide executive briefings for the State Leadership within the operational area ensuring all disciplines are incorporated.
  - b. Coordinate decision-making support to the impacted local leadership to promote consistency in the area of operation for protective actions, regional impacts, financial assistance, public information, and other areas of concern.
- 2. Resource Management
  - a. Monitor the state mission management system and respond to mission requests for the assigned area of operation.
  - b. Establish staging areas to receive and manage incoming state and local mutual aid resources into the area of operations.
  - c. Ensure incident-wide coordination among discipline specific staging areas within the area of operation.
  - d. Prioritize the deployment of state and mutual aid local resources within the area of operations. Ensure coordination and unified tracking among all disciplines within the area of operation.
  - e. The specific SOPs/SOGs of each Emergency Support Function (ESF) must outline the method for resource allocation, division, and coordination between the SEOC command and the FSERT command.
  - f. Ensure proper demobilization of all resources assigned to the operational area.
- 3. Technical Assistance and decision-making coordination
  - a. Provide technical assistance to support local response operations from all available state and federal organizations.
  - b. Coordinate the provision of federal financial assistance in support of the impacted local jurisdictions.
- 4. Situational Awareness

- a. Develop Incident Actions Plans, situation reports, and flash reports for the area of operation.
- b. Coordinate with the SEOC the damage assessment information within the area of operation to maximize federal disaster assistance.
- c. Maintain ongoing information coordination with SERT Liaisons located in the county emergency operations centers.
- 5. Coordinate information and activities at the highest levels with the SEOC.
  - a. Submit Incident Actions Plans, situation reports, and flash reports for the area of operation to the SEOC.
  - b. Participate in State Coordinating Officer, Deputy State Coordination Officer, SERT Chief and FSERT Chief daily conference calls.

#### Assumptions

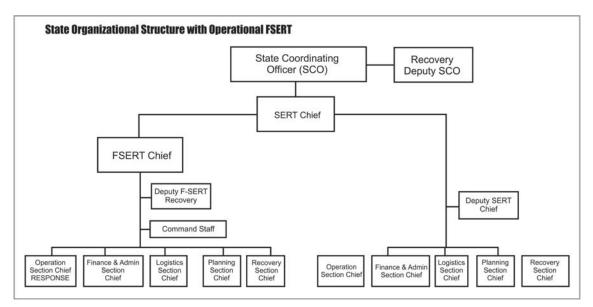
- <u>The FSERT is the highest level field coordination element that the</u> <u>State of Florida utilizes.</u>
- The FSERT may absorb the other coordinating elements operating within the area.
- The FSERT operates in support of local response operations and does not take over command and control of any local response operations.
- Staffing resources available for activation of the FSERT and each ESF will have capacity for 24/7 staffing.
- Efforts will be made to have federal organizations co-locate the Joint Field Operations with the FSERT.
- Each county EOC, located within the area of operation, may designate liaisons to co-locate within the FSERT.

# **Organization / Roles and Responsibilities**

The FSERT structure and staff assignments are identical to those of the SEOC with the exception of the chain of command of the FSERT is a FSERT Chief who reports to the SERT Chief at the SEOC. As stated in the concept of operations, the FSERT Section Chief's, as well as all other position's decision-making authority, is confined to the area of operation. The FSERT Chief will

defer to the SERT Chief when allocating any resources that originate outside of the designated FSERT area of operation.

The Chart below illustrates the lines of responsibility and accountability for the FSERT and SERC, illustrating the overall structure of the State response with an active FSERT.



#### **SERT Forward Structures**

The FSERT is one of many forward organizational structures that may be deployed by the SCO in support of the response and recovery operations within the State of Florida. Forward structures are designed to enhance response and recovery capabilities of the SERT and ensure the needs of local response operations are met. Each of these organizational structures serves varying and/or evolving missions during various phases of the response and recovery operations cycle. Some organizational field elements may operate simultaneously. Other field elements will have a temporary life span and be deactivated or absorbed as other structures are activated.

1. The State Management Team: The State Management Team (SMT) serves as the forward coordinating element for the SERT and the SCO. It provides situational awareness, operational planning to the SERT, and logistical support to the SERT and SCO for forward deployment. The SMT may be tasked to assist the SERT Chief with other missions. If the scope and magnitude warrant expansion of forward operations, then the additional SERT staffing will augment the State Management Team and the SMT will be absorbed to support the FSERT. (See SMT Operational Guideline)

# **Concept of Operations**

An FSERT when established would coordinate response operations within a designated area of operation on behalf of the SEOC. A FSERT conducts operations, manages missions, and deploys resources within the defined area of operation in support of local EOCs. The FSERT would also encompass all forward coordination and command elements for the ESFs, which are already in the impacted area.

The decision to establish a FSERT should be based upon extraordinary coordination and resource support challenges surrounding an incident. Such conditions must demonstrate that the decision to move the area of operations to the vicinity of the incident scene will enhance the SERT's ability to manage local and state assets to support the incident.

#### **Decision Triggers**

- Incident complexities: The incident complexities are such that situational awareness and resource coordination are difficult to manage from the traditional SEOC location in Tallahassee. Multiple incidents occurring simultaneously in different areas of the state may challenge incident support capabilities from a single location due to variation in resource support and technical expertise needed in response to the multiple incidents. (i.e. a biological terrorist incident and natural wild land fire).
- Communications: Extended loss of critical communications or critical support infrastructure may complicate the ability of the local EOCs to coordinate effectively with the SEOC. Co-location with local decisionmakers (unified command) within the impacted area will enable the State to support response and recovery operations to the fullest extent.
- 3. Level of Impact: The scope and magnitude of the disaster may challenge the SEOC to maintain adequate situational awareness and mission support status. Establishment of the FSERT would divide the area of operation and allow focused response within the designated area of operation.
- 4. Other: The State Coordinating Officer (SCO)may deem that the circumstances provide sufficient cause to support the need to establish a FSERT.

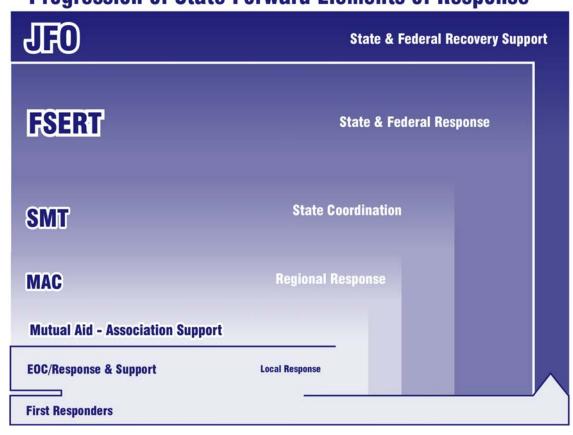
#### Supplemental Order

Based upon authority established in Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, as well as criteria set forth, above, the SCO, or designee, shall recommend a supplement

be issued to the original Executive Order for the incident establishing the FSERT. The supplemental order should state the reasons for the establishment of the FSERT, the area of operation, the estimated duration for FSERT operations, and any special considerations to establish and sustain FSERT operations, including planning, operations, logistics, finance, and administrative support (See Mobilization Section). In addition, the supplemental order will serve as an official delegation of authority to the designated FSERT Chief.

#### **Resource Tasking**

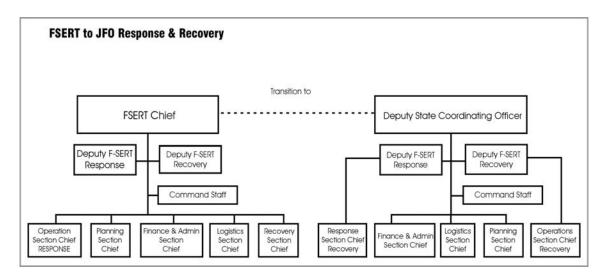
Once established, the FSERT will assume full control of all resources and missions management within the assigned area of operations, including resource inventory and mission tracking systems, staff and other state agency assets pursuant to the authority provided in Chapter 252, Florida Statutes. Accordingly, the FSERT CHIEF and all ESFs operating in the FSERT will function with full authority within their area of operations otherwise provided by Florida law and the Executive Order issued pursuant to the incident. All State assets or forward elements within the area of operation established for the FSERT shall report to and be responsive to the FSERT upon its activation.



**Progression of State Forward Elements of Response** 

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- 2. FSERT: As detailed in this procedure, an FSERT will be established to coordinate response and recovery operations within a designated area of operation on behalf of the SEOC. As such the FSERT conducts operations, coordinates missions, and deploys resources within the defined area of operation in support of local EOCs. All other forward coordination and command elements for the ESFs within the area of operations will report to the FSERT.
- 3. Federal/State Joint Field Office: The Joint Field Office (JFO) is a combined state, and federal unified command for response and recovery operations within the State of Florida. Once the JFO is established, the FSERT should merge into and provide staffing for the Joint Field Office when conditions permit. The JFO may provide operation space for all forward SERT elements if this merger occurs. The JFO will operate under the unified command concept.



#### Location of FSERT at Pre-designated Alternate EOC Locations

Alternate EOC locations should be considered for FSERT operations in the post disaster environment. For further information related to these locations see the SEOC Continuity of Operations Plan.

- 1. Establishing facilities for the FSERT:
  - a. If a State Management Team (SMT) is in the area of operations where a FSERT will be deployed, the SMT will identify potential locations for the FSERT and recommend sites to the SERT Logistics Section Chief. The Logistics Chief will make the final

site selection and recommendation to the SERT Chief who approves the location and support.

b. If a FSERT CHIEF has been designated, the FSERT CHIEF may select the site for the FSERT. This may be done with the aid of the SMT in the field.

c. In either case, the SMT and/or FSERT CHIEF must ensure that facility agreements are in place prior to FSERT deployment.

- 2. ESFs will be deployed to the FSERT and an Emergency Coordinating Officer (ECO) or designee will remain at the SEOC.
- 3. The FSERT <u>can</u> function simultaneously with several SMTs activated in the state. When other coordinating elements are operating within an area where a FSERT is established they will be directed to report to the FSERT.

#### Notification

- 1. The decision to activate the FSERT will be made by the SERT Chief based upon criteria set forth in the Concept of Operations.
- 2. Based on a recommendation from the SERT Chief, the SCO will designate a FSERT Chief and define the area of operation for the incident and FSERT operations, and designate the operational objectives.
- 3. The FSERT will be led by the designated FSERT CHIEF.
- 4. The SCO will direct that a specific mission be entered into the SERT mission management system.
- 5. At a minimum, the mission will include the location and area of operation of the FSERT, the name of the designated FSERT Chief, the proposed dates for FSERT operation and any special information for the ESFs that will enable their mobilization and mission.
- 6. The SERT Operations Chief will notify all ESFs that are required to deploy to the FSERT. The Emergency Coordinating Officers will receive specific mission instructions from the mission management system.
  - a. Note: The Radiological Response Plan has a very specific procedure for the transfer of control from the SEOC to the FSERT. (See Radiological Annex to th Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan).

#### Mobilization

- The SERT Chief will task the FSERT Chief with specific mission requirements outlining specific support objectives for the incident. This information will be addressed in the supplement to the Executive Order. When possible, this will include incident priorities, situation reports, local points-of-contact and any special considerations for the incident to facilitate or promote effective incident management. (Detailed assignments, limitations, mission, etc.)
- 2. The State Operations Chief conducts a state mobilization briefing with the FSERT representatives.
- 3. When defining the parameters of the area of operations, the SERT Chief will consider the following elements:
  - Boundaries of state and/or federal coordinating elements operating in or near the intended area of operations including Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Groups, Area Command, Incident Management Teams (IMT),
  - Units of local, state or federal government or private sector stakeholders that should be briefed or included in the response support missions in the area of operations
- 4. Prior to deploying personnel to the FSERT, the SEOC Logistics Section and/or the State Management Team will prepare a logistics plan to establish the facility for the FSERT and all support needs, including food and lodging.
- 5. Prior to deploying personnel to the FSERT, the SEOC Emergency Support Function (ESF) 2 - Communications and/or the State Management Team will prepare a communications plan to establish efficient and effective communications for the FSERT.
- 6. The SERT Chief or FSERT Chief will request a Type I or Type II Incident Management Team (IMT) to support or reinforce the FSERT.

#### Deployment

- 1. Once a site has been located, the FSERT Chief will issue a deployment notification to all ECOs specifying the "check-in" location and expected date/time to commence FSERT operations at that location.
- 2. The FSERT Chief will direct a deployment roster to be created that includes all pertinent data required for the deploying FSERT member.
- 3. All personnel deployed to the FSERT must have/be provided a cell phone and computer wireless access card, in advance. ESF 2

(Communications) will coordinate field support for the FSERT to maximize cell telephone and computer operability.

- 4. The SERT Chief and the FSERT CHIEF will determine when FSERT is operational. This decision will be coordinated with affected counties within the FSERT Area of Responsibility (AOR) and communicated to FEMA.
- 5. Operations will coincide at the start of the next Operational Period.

#### Demobilization

- 1. The FSERT Chief will make a recommendation to SERT Chief for demobilization of the FSERT based in part on the following:
  - a. The FSERT has substantially completed all missions.
  - b. The activity level for the event has substantially diminished and can be effectively managed by local jurisdictions and/ or SEOC without continued forward state assistance.
- 2. The SCO will make the final determination for the demobilization of the FSERT and will direct staff to enter the update to the original mission to demobilize the team
- 3. The FSERT Plans Section will develop a detailed demobilization plan that:
  - a. Will identify the date and time of the demobilization.
  - b. Coordinates the demobilization of all expendable and nonexpendable resources managed by the FSERT in cooperation with the SERT Logistics Chief, as appropriate for the incident.
  - c. The plan should address critical incident stress management (CISM) process, in conjunction with SERT procedures.
  - d. Will include a decontamination plan for personnel, vehicles and equipment. It will also address the assessment and remediation of any structures and facilities utilized.
  - e. Will include details for a closeout meeting with local EOC(s) to ensure a smooth transition of duties and responsibilities and any potential issues that warrant specific discussion.
  - f. Will include an After Action Report to discuss team performance.
  - g. Will include a safety briefing for personnel traveling back to their home areas.
  - h. Should include mechanical services of all vehicles by a qualified person and other equipment utilized during the deployment.

#### FSERT Transition to the Joint Field Office (JFO)

FSERT operations will continue in the forward location, in or near the disaster impact area, for as long as deemed necessary by the SCO. As disaster operations continue, the Federal/State Joint Field Office (JFO) will be established to provide a location to coordinate long-term disaster recovery activities. The SCO/FCO may determine that there are additional advantages to the disaster response and recovery effort if the FSERT Operations were co-located and integrated into the operations of the JFO.

Advantages with co-locating the FSERT with JFO Operations include:

- On-going management processes are not interrupted upon "closing down" an FSERT operation.
- Consistent and coordinated Incident Action Plan for the Operational Period.
- Ensuring services to the disaster survivors are maximized through the "transition" from response operations to recovery operations. (continuity of service).

There are several natural integration points for FSERT into the JFO.

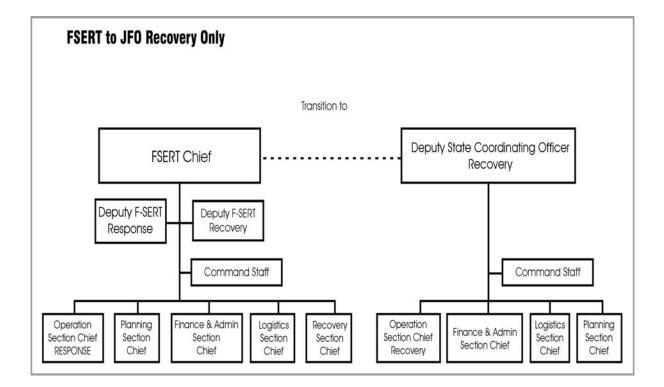
- If FSERT operating space is sufficient to support the JFO organization, it will be recommended that the JFO organization co-locate with the FSERT at that location.
- Integrating FSERT operations into the JFO when the JFO facility first opens, depending upon the size and complexity of the event.
- FSERT operations remain standalone from JFO operations until traditional response activities diminish and then transition FSERT operations into JFO operations.

Regardless of the integration point selected, success and optimization of the organizations revolve around the use of National Incident Management and Incident Command System principles and tools.

General integration rules include:

• Start FSERT demobilization planning/transition planning at least 3 operational periods prior to the expected transition.

- Ensure an aggressive management of the transition and integration of the FSERT into JFO operations. This management effort will continue to ensure traditional *response* activities continue uninterrupted during the transition to traditional *recovery* activities.
- FSERT/JFO management should be engaged in continuous staffing assessment to ensure the joint organizations are properly staffed and structured.
- Based on the tempo of operations, the SCO may retain the FSERT as a unit operating within the Joint Field Office. The most streamlined organization, however, would be the FSERT "response" missions integrated into the Joint Field Office "recovery" missions to provide a seamless service delivery to the impacted jurisdiction(s) and residents.
- If an FSERT is established when the JFO is established it will be the FSERT that transitions to the JFO rather than the SERT as illustrated in the graphic below.



#### After Action Reporting

FSERT CHIEF will direct the FSERT Plans Chief to prepare an after action report for each deployment of the FSERT. The report should adhere to the minimum format and content requirements of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

- a. The FSERT Chief will establish a time, date and location for FSERT staff and key personnel to meet following any deployment, to evaluate the team's effectiveness and to discuss lessons learned, what worked or didn't work, and to project future FSERT needs.
- b. The FSERT CHIEF or designee will conduct this meeting and the FSERT Plans Chief will compile meeting notes.
- c. FSERT Staff will be responsible for producing and critiquing incident documentation and staff performance to be included in the After Action Report (AAR).

The FSERT Chief will submit the AAR to the SCO. Individual team member performance evaluations will be completed upon request.

## Plan Maintenance

The FSERT SOG will be reviewed annually by the SERT Operations and Plans Section Chiefs and updated, based on AAR recommendations, with the final approval of the SERT Chief. The SERT Operations Chief will distribute to the designated ECOs and to Division of Emergency Management staff.

# **Reference and Authorities**

This procedure is compliant with Chapter 252, Florida Statutes. It will be used in concert with current SERT Operational Procedures. The Operations Section and Field Operations Guide link this plan to the authority of the SERT Chief during an activation of the SERT. The CEMP defines how the SERT Chief's authority is derived from the SCO and the Governor of the State of Florida. The FSERT reports to the FSERT Chief appointed by the SCO.

- Chapter 252, Florida Statutes
- State of Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
- SERT, Operations Section Procedures
- SERT, Recovery Operations Plan

# Appendix A – Notification Procedures

Action	Team Member
Notify the FSERT Chief for FSERT of mission tasking to implement FSERT Procedure, scope of the assignment, and mission guidelines	SERT Chief
Establish communications with the SERT Leadership (ECOs), if a member is unable to respond, the ECO must designate an alternate ECO for the FSERT	FSERT Chief
<ul> <li>Provide an initial briefing for all FSERT members to include:</li> <li>Reporting location</li> <li>Mission assignment and operational expectations</li> <li>Latest event information and environmental conditions</li> <li>Transportation and logistical support requirements</li> <li>The requirements of the FSERT members to be prepared, self-sufficient, and adequately equipped to perform their assignment</li> <li>Media issues and procedures</li> <li>Identification of the affected State/local emergency management structure</li> <li>Pertinent unique/cultural local considerations</li> <li>Individual and performance expectations including work hours and activity schedules</li> <li>Problem-solving processes and methods for establishing/changing priorities</li> <li>Information flow and reporting requirements</li> </ul>	FSERT Chief
Notify SERT Liaisons, SMT, MACC and all other field operational units within the area of operation of the FSERT activation, location, and contact information. The FSERT Chief will provide instructions on merging field command and control units within the Area of Operation	FSERT Chief
Maintain status of other FSERT members while en-route to the reporting location at the incident	FSERT Chief
Develop a communications / deployment plan	Planning Section Chief

Consider logistical requirements (i.e., transportation, communications, etc.) with the team members prior to arrival at the assigned location. Refer to SEOC Continuity of Operations Plan	Logistics Section Chief
Notify the county Emergency Management Directors within the Area of Operation once operational control has been fully transferred to the FSERT	Operations Section Chief

# Appendix B – Post Arrival Action List

After arriving in Impacted Area:

Action	FSERT Team Member
Identify security requirements	Logistics Section Chief
Submit initial arrival report to SEOC	Plans Section Chief
Meet with local EM Director(s).	FSERT Chief
Meet with SMT leader, and MAC leaders (if applicable), arrange for coordination or integrations	FSERT Chief
Establish communications based on Communications plan provided by ESF-2 prior to deployment.	Logistics Section Chief
Identify additional ESF's required to deploy to F- SERT location	Plans Section Chief
Notify SEOC when FSERT is operational and	Operations Section
ready to assume duties and responsibilities	Chief
Coordinate with Salvation Army and/or Red Cross	Logistics Section
and on sustainability requirements (if needed)	Chief
Assign personnel to act as safety officers	Operations Section Chief
Assign FSERT members shifts to ensure adequate rest (recommend minimum of 8 hours per 24)	Operations Section Chief

# **Appendix C – FSERT Operational Milestones**

- 1. Emergency/Disaster Event Occurs.
- 2. Multiple counties severely impacted.
- 3. SMT deployed (may be deployed) to impacted area to determine State resources coordination needs.
- 4. Decision made by the State Emergency Response Team Chief (SERT Chief) to deploy a Forward State Emergency Response Team (FSERT).
- 5. SMT notified the FSERT will be deployed.
- 6. Notification to EOCs in the incident area is made
- 7. SCO appoints FSERT Chief.
- 8. FSERT Chief notifies FSERT Members of deployment orders and Appoints:
  - a. Operations Section Chief
  - b. Information and Plans Chief
  - c. Communications Officer
  - d. Public Information Officer
  - e. Logistics Chief
  - f. Safety Officer

Requests:

- g. Communication Plan
- d. Logistical Support Plan
- e. Assembly briefing
- f. Deployment schedule
- 8. FSERT Planning Cycle begins
- 9. FSERT prepares for deployment
- 10. FSERT arrives at deployment location
- 11. FSERT establishes communication link with SEOC
- 12. Contact with County EM/EOC(s) is established
- 13. Contact with other State forward elements is established
- 14. FSERT begins initial operations per order of the SCO or SERT Chief
- 15. FSERT PIO establishes/joins JIC
- 16. FSERT Chief begins command and control operations with FSERT branch chiefs responsible for submission of required plans and reports
- 17. FSERT and other selected staff conduct conference calls with SEOC daily
- 18. Operational service levels begins to diminish, a decision is made to begin demobilization
- 19. FSERT returns to SEOC
- 20. FSERT checks, issues repair orders and stores equipment
- 21. FSERT Team members participate in operational critique

# **Appendix D - Personal Items Checklist**

- 1. Several changes of clothing/dirty laundry bag or trash bag
- 2. Flashlights and batteries
- 3. Bug spray
- 4. Personal medications and toiletries
- 5. Sunscreen and/or a hat/sunglasses
- 6. Rain gear
- 7. Work boots/shoes/ Steel toed boots --- tennis shoes for the base camp/in garrison environment but not in areas of damage)
- 8. Sleeping bags/ blankets
- 9. Towels
- 10. Identification credentials/valid drivers license
- 11.Go kits

Logistics will provide:

- 1. Global Positioning System (GPS) units
- 2. State Emergency Response Team apparel
- 3. Garbage bags
- 4. Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) / non-perishable food for at least seven days
- 5. Bottled water/ sports drinks for at least seven days
- 6. First Aid and safety equipment
- 7. Perishable items such as plastic dining utensils, paper products such as toilet paper, paper towels etc.
- 8. Maps of the area of operation

# Appendix E - Transition from Response to Recovery operations

When a Level 3 is ordered by the SCO/State Incident Commander, Recovery will assume day to day operational control from the SERT Chief and take the following actions while keeping the SERT Chief informed of Recovery activities:

- Monitoring of SBA and Bridge Loan activities.
- Reporting Claims Facility payment activity, SBA Loan and Bridge Loan information to the SCO/State Incident Commander and SERT Chief.
- The disaster incident software system will be stood up and a data drop will be completed.
- Recovery PACs will coordinate with State agencies and prepare Project Worksheets.
- The Disaster Incident Claims Approval Committee members will be appointed by the SCO/Incident Commander and the members will meet to formalize the procedure to review, approve, and pay reimbursement claims.
- Recovery staff supporting the Claims Approval Committee will receive, review, and validate claim documentation.
- Upon payment approval by the Claims Approval Committee, payment will be made to State agencies.
- Any request for reimbursement from individuals or businesses will be directed to the Central Claims Facility established by the Responsible Party.
- Recovery staff will monitor activity at SBA field offices and when appropriate and approved by the SCO/State Incident Commander, will coordinate the closure of the offices. However, SBA applications will still be able to be submitted on line via the SBA web portal.

Recovery activity will continue for the appropriate term and until such time as the SCO/State Incident Commander determines the disaster event closed.