

Florida Division of Emergency Management
Mutual Aid Branch Standard Operating Guide (SOG)
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RECORD OF CHANGE:

Change #	Date Entered	Contents	Initials
Page 10	July 2020	EMAC Training Guidance	AV

I. Introduction

- a. Large-scale emergencies and disasters may exceed the capabilities of state and local government to effectively respond and recover. Resources may be required from outside the affected area to augment on-going efforts. Assistance may be provided from in-state mutual aid, inter-state mutual aid, and requests for federal assistance.
- b. The Mutual Aid Branch (Branch) resides within the Logistics Section, and the Mutual Aid Branch Director reports directly to the Logistics Section Chief. The Branch has three main functions: (1) The Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement, (2) the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and (3) the Federal Resource Request Form.

II. Purpose

- a. The purpose of this SOG is to provide guidelines for the Mutual Aid Branch to implement the procedures of Florida's mutual aid programs as listed above.

III. Scope

This Operational Guide is limited to the coordination, tasking, and utilization of Intra-State and Inter-State mutual aid, and processing Resource Request Forms. This SOG is based on the [State Unified Logistics Plan](#) and establishes policies and guidelines for local and state decision-makers to follow during a major or catastrophic disaster.

IV. Florida's Mutual Aid Programs

- a. The Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) is tasked with implementing mutual aid programs at the local, state, and federal level. This section outlines each of the 3 main programs responsible to FDEM. These mutual aid programs are essential components of emergency management planning, response and recovery operations. They can increase available resources and improve response and recovery efforts.
- b. Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement (SMAA)
 - i. Per [Florida Statute § 252.40](#), the governing body of political subdivisions may enter into mutual aid agreements for emergency aid and assistance in case of emergencies too extensive to be dealt with unassisted. The Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement serves as a venue for the exchange of emergency resources throughout the State of Florida. All 67 counties are required signatories of the agreement.
 - ii. The agreement itself outlines terms in which SMAA may be used. It also requires parties in mutual aid agreements to complete a "Form B," which captures mission authorization and cost estimates for reimbursement. The

SMAA is intended to allow for more timely and cost-effective resource acquisition than out-of-state mutual aid or federal assistance typically provides.

- c. Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)
 - i. The Emergency Management Assistance Compact is managed by the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). All 13 articles of The Compact were ratified by the State of Florida and established in the Florida Statutes § 252.920. All 50 States, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have also ratified the articles of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. These states are referred to as “member states.”
 - ii. EMAC serves as an avenue for member states to provide assistance to requesting states. A gubernatorial declaration is required to activate EMAC and request assistance. The exchange of resources is coordinated with the Mutual Aid Branch through a Resource Support Agreement (RSA), formerly known as the Request for Assistance (REQ-A).
 - iii. EMAC provides access to a larger pool of resources than the SMAA and allows specialized state resources to be deployed out-of-state. EMAC is potentially more cost-effective than requests for federal assistance.
- d. Federal Resource Request Form (RRF)
 - i. The Federal Resource Request Form (RRF) allows the State of Florida to request federal resources. FDEM may request specialized federal resources or assistance once the State of Florida has expended its available resources. Federal resource requests can only be approved by the Governor’s Authorized Representatives, as established in a memorandum between FDEM and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region IV Response.
- e. Other Mutual Aid Programs
 - i. Other Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) may maintain their own mutual aid agreements for emergency assistance. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement manages mutual aid resource requests through ESF-16. ESF 4/9 manages mutual aid missions within its jurisdiction through the Florida Fire Chief’s Association Statewide Emergency Response Plan (SERP). ESF-8 manages their mutual aid requests prior to the activation of the National Ambulance Contract or an EMAC request is made for additional resources.

V. Concept of Operations

- a. This section provides guidance for the mission process when the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) is activated to level 1 or 2. Additional staff will be required to augment the responsibilities and functions of the Mutual Aid

Branch. The forms for each of the mutual aid requests can be found in WebEOC in the SERT File Library.

b. Mission Flow

- i. Once a resource shortfall has been identified by the requesting entity in need, they will input their request as a mission in WebEOC. The request should include all of the required fields in WebEOC to be considered a complete mission request. Resource requestors should be as specific as possible for their needs, and assisting entities are encouraged to ask questions for clarification.
- ii. The mission will then go to the applicable Branch & ESF to fulfill the mission. If the needs exceed the abilities of the ESF, then the mission will be tasked to the State Logistics Section to determine the means to acquire the resources.
- iii. If mutual aid is determined to be the best option to address the resource shortfall, the State Logistics Section will task the mission to the Mutual Aid Branch.
- iv. The Mutual Aid Branch will acknowledge the request by changing the status in WebEOC from "Tasked," to "In-Progress Mobilizing." Each request will be recorded and tracked on the Daily Log. More information on the Daily Log can be found in the reporting section.
- v. The Mutual Aid Branch will evaluate each request to determine:
 1. The viability and priority of the request,
 2. whether additional information is needed, and
 3. if adequate resources are available within the state to address the resource request.
- vi. The Mutual Aid Branch will work with the resource requestor to determine the best option to address the resource shortfall.
- vii. To complete the request, follow the procedure outlined in the SMAA, EMAC, and RRF Section in each specific portion of the concept of operations.
- viii. After the resource is acquired, the resource requestor will be responsible for the operational coordination, mobilization, demobilization process for the resource. However, the entity will work with the Mutual Aid Branch informed about the whereabouts of the resource.
- ix. Upon completion of the mission, the WebEOC Mission is changed to "Demobilizing," until the resources arrive back to their jurisdiction. Then, the mission is changed to "Complete." The requesting party is responsible for reimbursing the assisting party.

VI. Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement (SMAA) Process

- a. Resources can often be secured through the SMAA process in an expedited and cost-effective manner. The following section provides guidance for coordinating and tasking resources through the SMAA.

1. Request for mutual aid is tasked to the Mutual Aid Branch through WebEOC.
2. When it is determined that in-state mutual aid through the SMAA is best to address the resource request, the Mutual Aid Branch will work with the resource requestor to complete Section I of the SMAA Form B.
3. After Section I is completed, the Mutual Aid Branch will post the resource request to the SMAA Support board in WebEOC and send a notification to County Emergency Management Directors.
4. When the assisting party has been identified, the Mutual Aid Branch will work with the assisting and requesting party to complete the SMAA Form B. The SMAA Form B serves as a legal agreement between the requesting and assisting party for reimbursement. Responding entities are *not authorized* to deploy without a completed SMAA Form B.
5. The completed SMAA Form B will be attached to the WebEOC Mission. Update the status of the mission to "En Route."
6. The Mutual Aid Branch will work with the assisting and requesting parties to coordinate the deployment of resources. Once resources have arrived, update the status of the mission to "On Scene."
7. Upon completion of the mission, the WebEOC Mission is changed to "Demobilizing," until the resources arrive back to their jurisdiction. Then, the mission is changed to "Complete."
8. The requesting party is responsible for reimbursing the assisting party. The assisting party will complete the [SMAA Claim Narrative](#) and invoice the requesting party.

VII. Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Process

- a. This section serves as the guideline for implementing EMAC to support response and recovery operations within the State of Florida. EMAC is also used to provide support to other states that request assistance. The agreement for resource support is Resource Support Agreements or RSAs.
- b. Requesting Assistance through EMAC
 - i. When the State of Florida requires resource support from other states, it can request resources using the EMAC Operating System (EOS). A state of emergency must be declared by the Governor of Florida before requesting resources through EMAC. The EMAC process is designed so that multiple staff members can work on any of the ongoing requests; a single individual is not requested to process an EMAC request from beginning to end.
 1. Once a State of Emergency has been declared by the Governor, the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) and/or the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) Chief will evaluate the potential to request resources through EMAC.

2. If it is determined that EMAC is needed, the Mutual Aid Branch Director will then contact the standing A-Team within the Florida Division of Emergency Management.
 3. The Mutual Aid Branch Director will then open an event in the EMAC Operating System (EOS). A Situation Report will be drafted based on information regarding the operational information, hours, and the meteorological information available. The Situation Report will then be broadcasted to all EMAC states and serve as a notification of the activation of EMAC for Florida.
 4. The EMAC National Coordinating State will also be notified of the activation of EMAC in Florida. This will provide coordination for EMAC requests at the national level. The National Coordinating State will also coordinate with the activated state(s) for a daily conference call to address operational needs.
 5. When a request for mutual aid is tasked to the Mutual Aid Branch through WebEOC, in-state mutual aid should be evaluated before determining that EMAC will be used to address a resource shortfall.
 6. If it is determined that EMAC is the best means to fill the outstanding resource need, the Mutual Aid Branch will follow the process outlined in the EMAC Checklist to complete the RSA. **All resource requests should reference the [Florida EMAC Reimbursement Guidance](#).**
 7. At the conclusion of a response event, the Mutual Aid Branch Director should send an e-mail to the assisting states detailing how to request reimbursement, where to send their reimbursement packets, and reference the Florida EMAC Reimbursement Guidance.
- c. Providing Assistance Through EMAC
- i. Other EMAC member states will request assistance through EMAC for response or recovery that exceeds their capabilities. The EMAC Coordinator will receive a notification via e-mail or phone call that their Governor has declared the State of Emergency in their state and they may begin requesting resources through EMAC.
 1. The Mutual Aid Branch Director will gather the available information and brief the Director of the Division of Emergency Management, the State Logistics Chief, the Bureau Chief of Response, and any other essential personnel.
 2. The Director or their designee will determine Florida's ability to assist the requesting state. This decision is largely based on timing, available resources, and potential for impact to the state for 14 or more days.

3. If Florida can support EMAC requests from other states, the Mutual Aid Branch Director will work with the Director or their designee on individual requests.
4. The Mutual Aid Branch Director will request Operations to open a WebEOC database to document EMAC support provided.
5. If there are questions about the resource request, the Mutual Aid Branch Director should reach out to the Requesting State EMAC Coordinator.
6. The Mutual Aid Branch Director will work with the resource provider to complete a mission-ready package (using the MRP form on the [FDEM Website](#)) with a cost estimate for the resource.
7. The cost estimate is reviewed by the Director or designee. After approval, the Mutual Aid Branch Director will upload the offer to EOS for the requesting state to review.
8. *Note: that in the event of an immediate life-safety need for the requested resource, an Authorized Representative may agree to work with a verbal offer to deploy the necessary resources. An RSA still needs to be processed for these missions to ensure cost reimbursement and coverage under EMAC for deployed personnel.*
9. If the offer is accepted, then Mutual Aid Branch Director will work with the Director or designee to sign Section 1 of the RSA.
10. After the requesting state signs Section 2 of the RSA, the RSA is complete. The Mutual Aid Branch Director will work with the resource provider to prepare the resources to deploy, which includes a pre-deployment briefing. This should include expected working conditions, mission documentation, and reimbursement tracking.
11. Each agency and participating individual(s) are responsible for documenting their own costs. Deployed personnel *must* document their deployment using ICS-214 forms.
12. Once the mission has been completed and all resources have returned, each participating agency will submit their reimbursement request, along with detailed supporting documentation to the Division of Emergency Management Finance & Administration Section.

VIII. Federal Resource Request (RRF) Process

- a. Resource request forms are used to request federal resource support. The event must be a federally declared disaster to request federal support. The process for requesting federal resources is detailed below:
 - i. The lead agency of the ESF may identify a service or need based on a request from either an impacted local government or another ESF. These

- needs can vary from ice, water, urban search & rescue teams, generators, meals, or other forms of life support and sustaining resources.
- ii. The lead agency or ESF must consider in-state mutual aid, purchasing, vendors, and EMAC support before requesting federal resources. The exception to this is if the resource that they are requesting is a specialized federal resource that is not available through another source.
 - iii. The Mutual Aid Branch will work with the lead agency or ESF to complete Sections I and II of the RRF.
 - iv. Once the RRF is complete, it will be attached to the request in WebEOC.
 - v. The Mutual Aid Branch will print the RRF and bring it to an authorized representative for signature and approval. Only Authorized Representatives as designated in the memo between FDEM and FEMA Region IV Response.
 - vi. After signature and approval, provide the signed RRF to the FEMA Operations Section Chief. If a team is not deployed to the SEOC, contact your FEMA State Representative to identify the RRF point of contact for the mission.
 - vii. FEMA will provide a final RRF that includes the cost estimate and scope of work. The Mutual Aid Branch will review this information with a State Approving Official and identify any concerns or changes to be made.
 - viii. The Mutual Aid Branch will continuously work with FEMA Operations, FEMA Logistics, and the FEMA Mission Assignment Managers to receive updates and maintain the status of the federal requests. This will be documented on the Daily Log with the Mutual Aid Branch.

IX. Roles & Responsibilities

- a. The Mutual Aid Branch is staffed by multiple sources. The Division of Emergency Management, an EMAC A-Team, Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement assistance, and other state agencies may provide staffing to the Mutual Aid Branch in the event of an activation of the SEOC.
- b. There are four main roles within the Mutual Aid Branch: The Mutual Aid Branch Director, Mutual Aid Branch Deputy Director, Mutual Aid Resource Tracker, and Mutual Aid Support Staff. For specific tasks for each of these roles, please see the Logistics Position Descriptions Document. A link to this document is included in the appendix section. In the event of a large-scale or catastrophic event that impacts the state, the Mutual Aid Branch Director must determine, in consultation with the State Logistics Chief, whether an EMAC A-Team is required to augment the current staff of the Mutual Aid Branch. The staff may also be augmented from another agency or county to staff the operational hours of the SEOC.
- c. Mutual Aid Branch Director
 - i. The Mutual Aid Branch Director coordinates EMAC, SMAA, and RRF requests tasked to Mutual Aid. The Branch Director's primary role is to ensure

- missions are tasked and fulfilled in a timely manner. They are also the primary mutual aid coordinator during blue skies. The Mutual Aid Branch Director also maintains documentation of previous activations and maintains SOPs, job aids, and conducts training for the Mutual Aid Branch.
- ii. When notified of an SEOC activation, the Mutual Aid Branch Director will assume a pre-designated workstation in the State Emergency Operations Center. The Mutual Aid Branch Director is responsible for the missions tasked to the Mutual Aid Branch from the Logistics Section. The Mutual Aid Branch Director will communicate with the Logistics Section Chief to ensure that all mutual aid requests have been addressed.
- d. Mutual Aid Branch Deputy Director
 - i. The Mutual Aid Deputy Director supports the Mutual Aid Branch Director during SEOC activations. This position ensures continuity of operations if the Mutual Aid Branch Director is otherwise occupied or unavailable. The Mutual Aid Branch Deputy Director should work with the Mutual Aid Branch Director to identify the specific responsibilities that they will carry out. The Mutual Aid Branch Deputy Director should be able to step in in the absence of the Mutual Aid Branch Director.
 - e. Mutual Aid Resource Tracker
 - i. The primary responsibility of the Mutual Aid Resource Tracker within the Mutual Aid Branch is to track incoming and outbound resources through EMAC, SMAA and other federal resources. This individual should be able to coordinate with multiple entities at once, to include assisting states, requesting ESFs, assisting counties, requesting counties, staff members of the Mutual Aid Branch, etc. This position is responsible for maintaining the Daily Log Spreadsheet.
 - ii. See Reporting Section below for more details.
 - f. Mutual Aid Support Staff
 - i. Mutual Aid Support Staff augment the Mutual Aid Branch Director & Deputy Mutual Aid Branch Director. They manage WebEOC, maintain communication with resource requestors and providers to ensure that all mutual aid missions are completed in a timely and efficient manner.
 - ii. Mutual Aid Support Staff will primarily be responsible for monitoring communication via e-mail (the mutualaid@em.myflorida.com inbox) and the phones at the SEOC desk.
 - g. Florida National Guard (FLNG) EMAC A-Team Member

The FLNG EMAC A-Team Member is A-Team qualified and serves as a point of coordination for all EMAC requests from the Florida National Guard. They integrate with the Mutual Aid Branch as a support staff member but leverage their military expertise to assist with requests specific to the FLNG.

X. Reporting

- a. The Mutual Aid Branch maintains a daily log for resource tracking and reporting. The daily log is filed in the SERT Drive in the Mutual Aid folder, sorted by event.
 - i. The daily log spreadsheet should include the following information:
 1. Requesting entity
 2. Responding entity
 3. Mission number
 4. EMAC/RRF tracking number
 5. Description of requested assistance
 6. Estimated cost
 7. Mission Status
 8. Additional notes or details
- b. The Mutual Aid Branch reports their estimated costs or “burn rates” each day to the FDEM Finance Section.
- c. The Mutual Aid Branch also reports the missions and estimated costs to the State Logistics Chief for review.
 - i. The Report should include the following information:
 1. Up-to-date Daily Log Spreadsheet
 2. Number of EMAC Requests
 3. Number of assisting states
 4. Number of SMAA Requests
 5. Number of assisting jurisdictions
 6. Number of RRF Requests
 7. Any issues or concerns that need attention

XI. Mutual Aid Training

- a. Mutual Aid Training for resource requestors
 - i. The Mutual Aid Branch Director is responsible for hosting annual training. This training should be held prior to the Atlantic Hurricane Season.
 - ii. This training informs resource requestors at the state and local levels how to request resources through SMAA, EMAC, and RRFs.
- b. Mutual Aid Training for Mutual Aid Support Staff
 - iii. EMAC training is available from the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) at the eLearning Center on the EMAC website. You must create a login and sign up to access the eLearning Center.
 - iv. NEMA provides online A-Team Training. More information on this course is available [here](#). The Mutual Aid Branch Director has the discretion to advise which personnel are eligible to complete this training. The course takes approximately 16 hours to complete.

1. All pre-requisite courses are required to be completed prior to the A-Team training course. Pre-Requisite courses for the online EMAC A-Team training is as follows:
 - i. EMAC Pre-Event Preparation for Resource Providers
 - ii. EMAC: Just in Time Training
 - iii. Practice and Implementation of EMAC
 - iv. EMAC Reimbursement for State Emergency Management Agencies
 - v. The National Guard and EMAC
 - vi. EMAC Bootcamp for Authorized Representatives
 2. To receive A-Team certification, individuals must complete all course modules, pass the test with a minimum score of 80%, and complete a final exercise to demonstrate their knowledge of the EMAC Operations System.
- v. Mutual Aid Branch Support Staff should work with the Mutual Aid Branch Director to receive training on activation responsibilities for EMAC, SMAA, and RRF.

XII. Attachments

- A. [State Unified Logistics Plan](#)
- B. [SMAA Form B](#)
- C. [RRF Checklist](#)
- D. [EMAC RSA Checklist](#)
- E. [SMAA Checklist](#)
- F. [Logistics Position Descriptions](#)
- G. [Master Glossary of EMAC Terms](#)