Unit 2: Emergency Operations Centers: The Basics

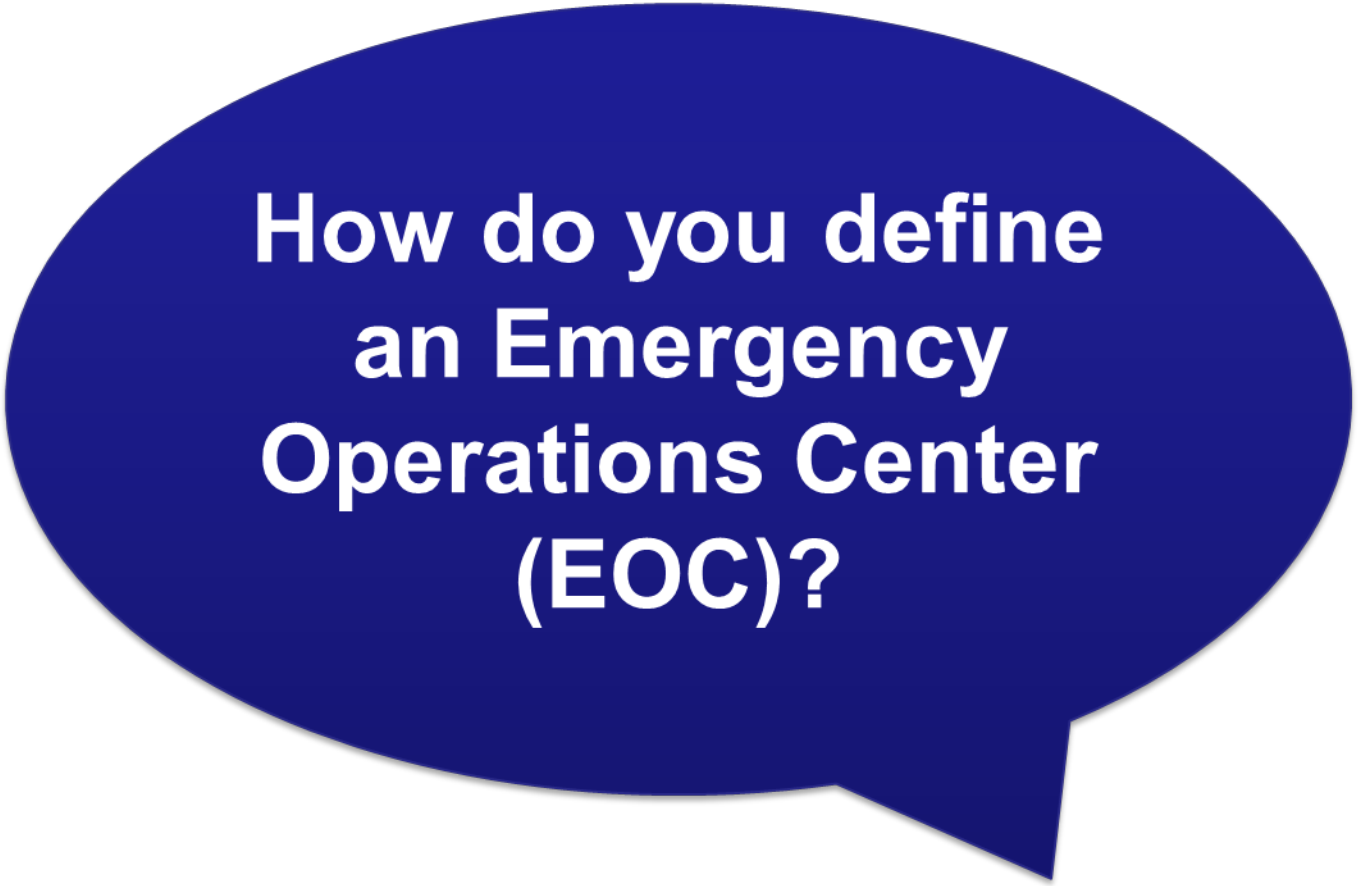
Unit Terminal Objective

Explain the EOC's critical link to the other NIMS Command and Coordination Structures.

Unit Enabling Objectives

- Summarize the benefits of an effective EOC.
- Explain the importance of an EOC and its relationship to the Incident Command/Unified Command.
- Identify the legal requirements, guidelines, and authorities that impact EOCs.
- Identify the role and stakeholders of a MAC Group.
- Explain the Operational Period Planning Cycle.
- Explain Situational Awareness (SA).

The EOC: Your Perspective



The EOC

The physical location where the coordination of information and resources to support incident management (on-scene operations) activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or located in a more central or permanently established facility, perhaps at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction.

Virtual EOC

In some communities, a Virtual EOC is established, where staff log in remotely.

Increasing numbers of jurisdictions use technology to conduct EOC operations "virtually"… with no central physical location.

Who Works at an EOC?

- Subject-matter experts (including traditional first responders) who work or live in the affected community and/or jurisdiction.
- Emergency management professionals who are the core staff and often assume leadership or coordination roles.

Discussion: A Critical Link

How do EOCs serve as a critical link during incidents, crises, or disasters?

EOCs: A Critical Link

EOCs are a critical link for supporting the other NIMS Command and Coordination Structures (ICS, MAC Group and JIS) before, during, and after an incident.

Response: Preparing for Incidents

- Activate.
- Monitor the hazards.
- Notify to leadership, stakeholders, and staff.
- Recall critical staff.
- Review policies and procedures.
- Prepare technology needs for EOC operations.
- Offer guidance.
- Inform/alert/warn the public.

Response: EOCs During Incident Response

- Support Incident Commanders.
- Provide decision makers with impact on CIRs.
- Support other communities/jurisdictions.
- Coordinate resources and plans.
- Develop situational awareness.
- Anticipate changes and propose alternatives.
- Determine future needs.
- Inform the public.
- Provide coordination and policy direction (as needed).

Throughout Recovery

- Transition a community from response to recovery (organizationally).
- Coordinate damage assessments.
- Create a narrative of the incident.
- Seek State and/or Federal assistance
- Assist FEMA in locating and establishing a JFO.
  - Same for DRCs.
- Inform the public.

Mitigating Future Damage

- **Critical link:**
  - **Future mitigation plans can originate within an EOC environment.**
  - **Critical mitigation staff are often present in an EOC during response.**
  - **The EOC creates and maintains documentation for future or immediate mitigation opportunities.**

Incident Command Terms

Incident Command Post (ICP)

- Field location where the primary functions of incident command are performed.

Incident Management Team (IMT)

- rostered group of ICS-qualified personnel consisting of an Incident Commander, Command and General Staff, and personnel assigned to other key ICS positions

An EOC is NOT an ICP or an IMT.

EOC Relationship to Incident Command

- Provides resources.
- Collects, shares, and analyzes information including coordinating communications and advance warnings.
- Establishes priorities among multiple incidents.
- In a complex incident, EOC may help facilitate coordination or provide policy direction.

Command and General Staff Positions

- Incident Commander or Unified Command
- Public Information Officer
- Safety Officer
- Liaison Officer
- Operations Section Chief
- Planning Section Chief
- Logistics Section Chief
- Finance/Administration Section Chief

Benefits of an Effective EOC

- Allows a community to prepare for a foreseeable incident.
- Allows Incident Commanders and jurisdictions to focus on the needs of the incident.
- Promotes problem resolution at lowest practical level.
- Helps establish SA.
- Coordinates long-term plans and determines future needs.
- Provides coordination and policy direction (as needed).

Benefits of an Effective EOC (Cont.)

- Resource identification, acquisition, and tracking.
- Allocate scarce resources.
- Provide legal and financial support.
- Liaisons with other jurisdictions and entities.
- Conduit between Incident Commanders.
- Provides information.
- May share the tactical load with IC.

The EOC Role

- **Provide coordinated support.**
- **Coordination, Information, decision support, resources.**
- **In some cases perform "tactical" functions.**

Strategic vs. Tactical EOC

"Strategic-focused" EOC: Determines and coordinates "what" is to be done during an incident to provided the needed support to Incident Command and the MAC Group.

"Tactical-focused" EOC: Focuses on tactical command functions for on-scene or field operations from the EOC.

Discussion: Strategic Approach

Instructions: Review the resource needs below.

Discussion Question: How would using a strategic approach help determine how to meet the needs of all three incidents?

Incident 1 Needs:
- Fire Apparatus
- EMS
- Helicopter
- Shelter

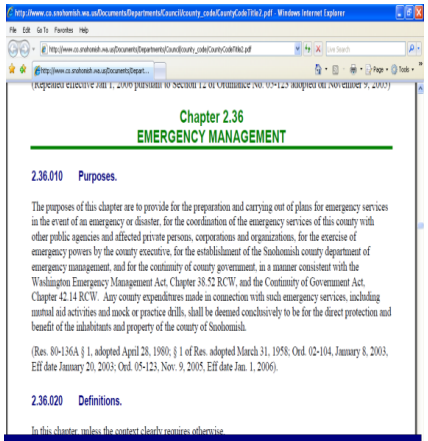
Incident 2 Needs:
- Helicopter
- S.A.R.
- Reverse Notification
- Shelter

Incident 3 Needs:
- Fire Apparatus
- Law Enforcement
- Reverse Notification
- Shelter

Legal Requirements and Authority

Typically, jurisdictional EOCs derive their authorities through a combination of statutes.

How do different levels of authority affect your EOC?


Chapter 2.36
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

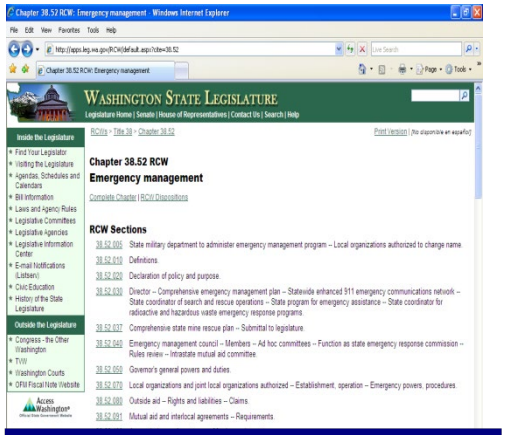
2.36.010 Purposes.

The purposes of this chapter are to provide for the preparation and carrying out of plans for emergency services in the event of an emergency or disaster, for the coordination of the emergency services of this county with other public agencies and affected private persons, corporations and organizations, for the exercise of emergency powers by the county executive, for the establishment of the Snohomish county department of emergency management, and for the continuity of county government, in a manner consistent with the Washington Emergency Management Act, Chapter 38.52 RCW, and the Continuity of Government Act, Chapter 42.14 RCW. Any county expenditures made in connection with such emergency services, including mutual aid activities and mock or practice drills, shall be deemed conclusively to be for the direct protection and benefit of the inhabitants and property of the county of Snohomish.

(Res. 80-136A § 1, adopted April 28, 1980; § 1 of Res. adopted March 31, 1958; Ord. 02-104, January 8, 2003, Eff date January 20, 2003; Ord. 05-123, Nov. 9, 2005, Eff date Jan. 1, 2006).

2.36.020 Definitions.

County

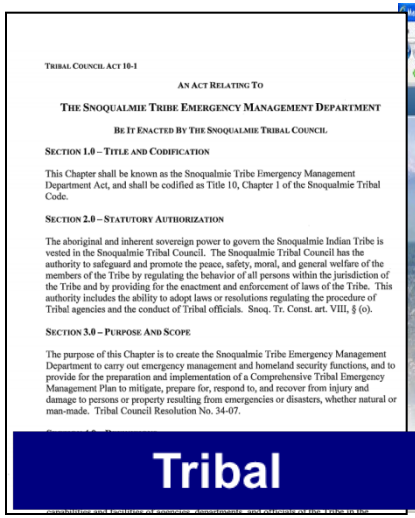

WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

Chapter 38.52 RCW
Emergency management

RCW Sections

38.52.005 State military department to administer emergency management program – Local organizations authorized to change name.
38.52.010 Definitions.
38.52.020 Declaration of policy and purpose.
38.52.030 Director – Comprehensive emergency management plan – Statewide enhanced 911 emergency communications network – State coordinator of search and rescue operations – State program for emergency assistance – State coordinator for radioactive and hazardous waste emergency response programs.
38.52.037 Comprehensive state mine rescue plan – Submittal to legislature.
38.52.040 Emergency management council – Members – Ad hoc committees – Function as state emergency response commission – Rules review – Intrastate mutual aid committee.
38.52.050 Governor's general powers and duties.
38.52.070 Local organizations and joint local organizations authorized – Establishment, operation – Emergency powers, procedures.
38.52.080 Outside aid – Rights and liabilities – Claims.
38.52.091 Mutual aid and interlocal agreements – Requirements.

State


TRIBAL COUNCIL ACT 10-1

AN ACT RELATING TO

THE SNOQUALMIE TRIBE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

BE IT ENACTED BY THE SNOQUALMIE TRIBAL COUNCIL

SECTION 1.0 – TITLE AND CODIFICATION

This Chapter shall be known as the Snoqualmie Tribe Emergency Management Department Act, and shall be codified as Title 10, Chapter 1 of the Snoqualmie Tribal Code.

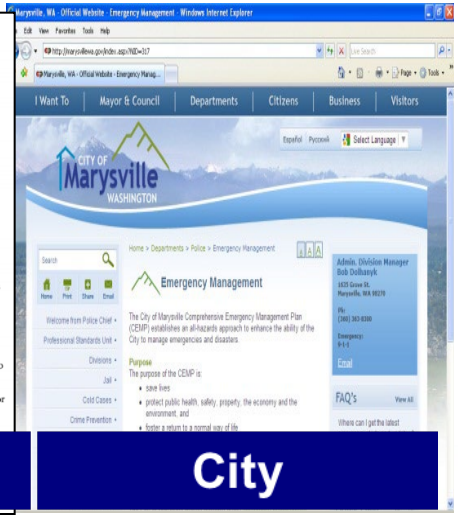
SECTION 2.0 – STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION

The aboriginal and inherent sovereign power to govern the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe is vested in the Snoqualmie Tribal Council. The Snoqualmie Tribal Council has the authority to safeguard and promote the peace, safety, moral, and general welfare of the members of the Tribe by regulating the behavior of all persons within the jurisdiction of the Tribe and by providing for the enactment and enforcement of laws of the Tribe. This authority includes the ability to adopt laws or resolutions regulating the procedure of Tribal agencies and the conduct of Tribal officials. Snoq. Tr. Const. art. VIII, § (o).

SECTION 3.0 – PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Chapter is to create the Snoqualmie Tribe Emergency Management Department to carry out emergency management and homeland security functions, and to provide for the preparation and implementation of a Comprehensive Tribal Emergency Management Plan to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from injury and damage to persons or property resulting from emergencies or disasters, whether natural or man-made. Tribal Council Resolution No. 34-07.

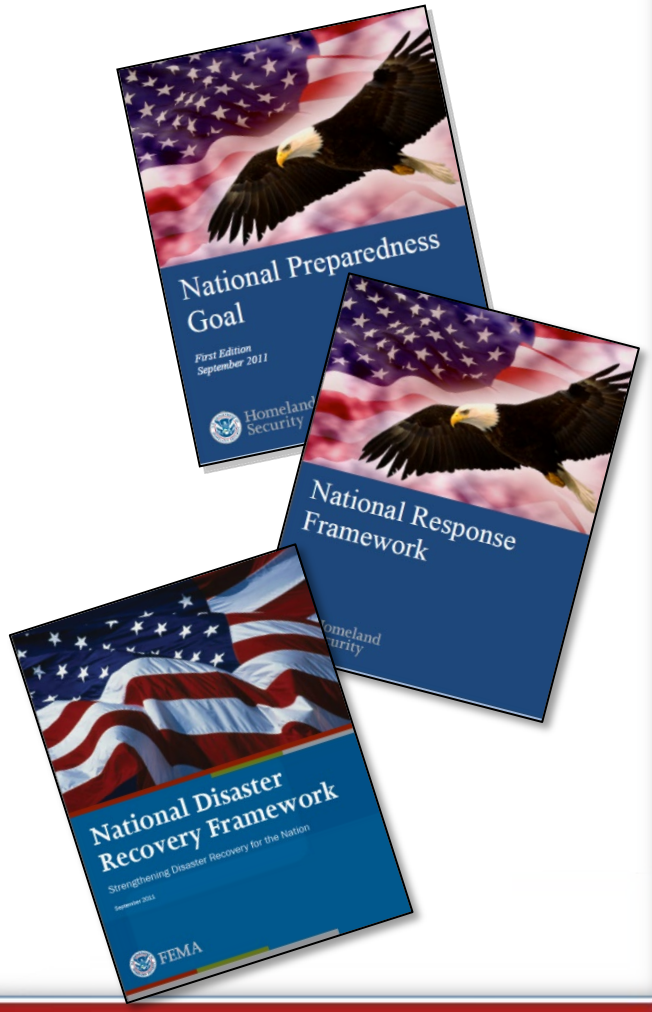
Tribal



City

Guidance and Doctrine

- National Preparedness Goal (NPG)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- National Frameworks for Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery
- Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP).



EOC Authority and MAC Group

- Local statutes or delegations of authority may limit an EOC's functions or actions.
  - Example: Monetary spending thresholds

- A MAC Group may:
  - Authorize additional fiscal resources.
  - Provide operational guidance.
  - Oversee complex incidents.
  - Provide operational or policy guidance.

MAC Group/ Policy Group & the EOC

MAC Group/ Policy Group strategic decisions by:

- **Issuing an Initial Policy Statement to guide the EOC.**
- **Determining EOC and MAC Group reporting requirements.**
- **Determining MAC Group decision-making process.**
- **Identifying fiscal issues and possible parameters for the EOC.**
- **Determining who needs to be included in the MAC Group.**

The MAC Group/ Policy Group

- May be located away from or co-located with EOC.
- Is often comprised of:
  - Elected officials.
  - Senior decision-makers.
  - Senior public safety officials.
  - High-level, subject-matter experts.
  - Additional personnel as required by MAC Group.

Discussion: In Your Opinion…

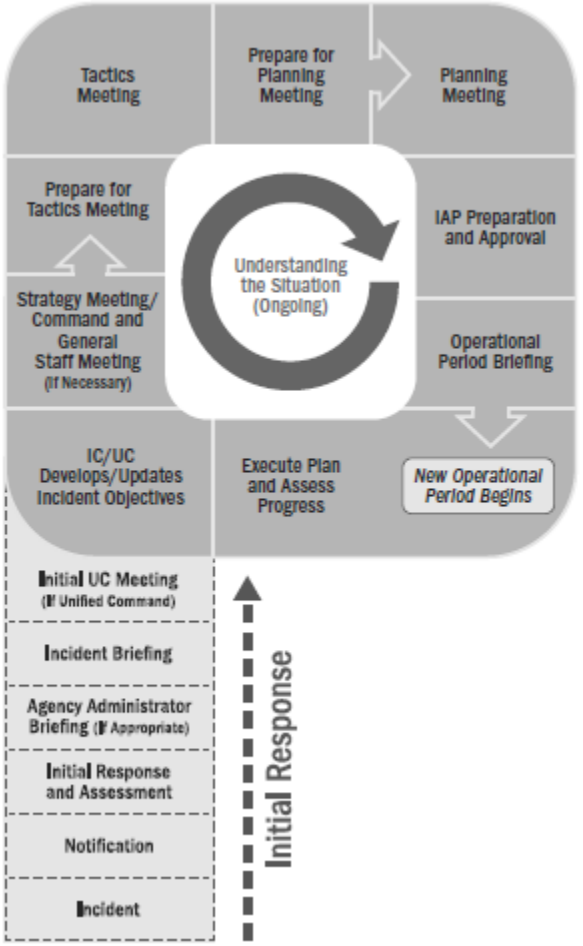
Why is it important (when possible) to request that a Fire or Police Chief remain part of the Policy Group instead of assuming a staff role within the EOC?

MAC Group/ Policy Group Statement

- Guides the EOC
- Frames response
- Provides priorities
- Establishes protocols
- Establishes reporting

Incident Operational Period Planning Cycle

- Incident Command's schedule of meetings and briefings for the operational period.
- Managed by the ICS Planning Section Chief.
- The EOC must also develop a cycle of information updates, meetings, briefings and reports.



Information

One of the key EOC responsibilities is the coordination, processing, and dissemination of information.

Situational Awareness

- Identify, process, and comprehend the critical information about an incident
- Know what is going on around you
- Requires continuous monitoring of relevant sources of information
- Results in comprehensive information collection, analysis, and dissemination in a relevant context
- Supports decision-making

Review: Incident Management Roles

Incident Commander	EOC Director and Staff
• Manage the incident at the scene • Keep the EOC/ MAC Group informed on all important matters pertaining to the incident	Support the Incident Commander and the MAC Group: • Provide Resources • Plan for Resource Requirements • Facilitate Situational Awareness
Joint Information System	**Senior Officials/ MAC Group**
• Enable communication between incident personnel • Provide Critical Information to the Public	Provide the Incident Commander and the EOC staff: • Authority • Mission & Strategic direction • Policy

Objectives Review

1. What are the benefits of an effective EOC?
2. What is the relationship between an EOC and the Incident/Unified Command?
3. What are the legal requirements, guidelines, and authorities that impact EOCs?
4. What is the role of a MAC Group and who are the stakeholders?
5. What is the Operational Period Planning Cycle?
6. What is Situational Awareness?