



Interagency Dispatch Implementation Project (IDIP) Strengthening the Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP)

April 11, 2016

Problem Statement

Inconsistencies exist in policy and direction for the development of a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) across agencies, states, and local governments. In many locations a COOP is not required or has not been developed, leaving that operation and the personnel they support vulnerable in the event of a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents and technological (radio, telecommunication, internet, etc.) or attack-related emergencies.

Key Points

- A standardized COOP template was developed for use as a result of previous dispatch studies. Not all dispatch centers follow this standard. Since the time of that previous effort, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has developed a standardized COOP template.
- Lack of standardization in the use and structure of a COOP may create confusion, inefficiencies and liability across the dispatch community.
- Inconsistencies in understanding the need for COOP, its use in identifying Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs) and Emergency Location Facilities (ELF) potentially creates a life and safety situation.
- Lack of consistent testing, training and exercising of a COOP leaves our agencies unprepared to handle emergency situations.
- In consultation with FS Emergency Management Specialist, Office of the Chief and DOI Emergency Management and International Programs Specialist, Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) the recommendation to use the standard FEMA continuity of operations (COOP) plan template was unanimous.

Recommended Steps to Implement Resolution

- Implement the use of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) standard COOP template. The template allows enough flexibility that it can be utilized from Tier 1 to Tier 3 Interagency Dispatch centers.
- Using the FEMA standard will bring COOP preparedness to the next level and ensure that wildland fire dispatch centers are better aligned with the Federal agencies they support.
- Utilize Regional FEMA COOP training representatives to ease the burden on Center management and to provide consistencies to plan development. The IDIP COOP Implementation Plan provides information on how to access these resources.
- COOP plan development will be included in the IDIP Center Manager's Academy (under development), advocating the importance of the plan and the need to test, train and exercise (TT&E).

Benefits to Implementation

- Interagency Dispatch Centers would have a standard COOP template that provides direction that ensured all essential elements were addressed.
- Standardized structure for this document would create greater efficiencies and allow for a seamless transition for unfamiliar personnel to the center.
- The development and implementation of a TT&E program for the COOP would enhance and maintain local knowledge in the event of a disaster and quick implementation is essential to life and safety.

Additional Information

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