

Integrated Emergency Management System

PROCESS OVERVIEW

September 1983



Federal Emergency Management Agency

9013

INTEGRATED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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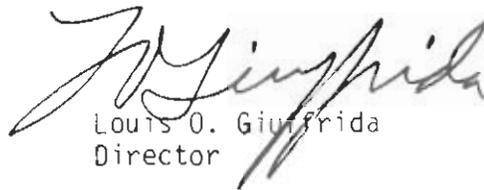
Federal Emergency Management Agency

FOREWORD

Fiscal Year 1984 marks the initial implementation of the Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS) at all levels of government nationwide. I hope that this Process Overview will answer many of your questions about IEMS and be of assistance to you in its implementation.

To be effective, IEMS must be your system as well as FEMA's system. It must meet your needs as well as it meets our needs. Your comments and suggestions will be an important factor in making future refinements to the process and in revising the guidance as we all gain experience in applying the IEMS concept to real-world situations.

IEMS will not increase our emergency management capabilities overnight. I ask that you be patient and that you approach the implementation with the same cooperative attitude you have demonstrated so often in the past. I also urge you to share your experiences with us through your normal channels. With your help, FY 1984 can be the beginning of an effective, enduring process for building and maintaining our Nation's emergency management capabilities.



Louis O. Giuffrida
Director

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THE INTEGRATED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
-- PROCESS OVERVIEW --

I. PURPOSE

This Process Overview is intended to (1) provide a general description of the Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS) and its relationship to the overall Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mission, (2) set forth how the IEMS concept can be applied by State and local governments, and (3) outline plans for implementing various components of IEMS.

Guidance documents for implementing three major components of the IEMS process will be provided by FEMA for use beginning in FY 1984:

- Hazards Analysis for Emergency Management (Interim Guidance), available September 30, 1983
- Emergency Management Capability Assessment (Interim Guidance), available November 30, 1983
- Multi-Year Development Planning (Interim Guidance), available January 31, 1984

II. BACKGROUND

Several major objectives were to be accomplished when the Federal Emergency Management Agency was created in 1979. One objective was to establish a single point of contact for State and local governments to deal with all emergency management programs at the Federal level. Another objective was to broaden the application of emergency preparedness and response resources to all hazards, and to take advantage of the similarities that exist in planning and response functions for peacetime and attack emergencies.

Understandably, since FEMA began as a collection of individual agencies, programs, and functions rather than as a unified, composite organization, realization of these objectives has taken time. The realignment of FEMA in October 1981 brought the majority of programs supporting State and local government efforts in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery together in one directorate. Although the multiplicity of programs remained, efforts were made to consolidate the transfer of program funds to State governments. These efforts culminated in the Comprehensive Cooperative Agreements which are now negotiated annually between FEMA and the States. At the same time FEMA was exploring ways to improve the delivery of assistance, attention was also being given to decentralizing program management responsibility to the appropriate level of government.

The consolidation and integration of programs envisioned by the establishment of FEMA continue to evolve. The agency, however, still must administer a variety of programs designed to provide assistance in meeting hazard-specific needs of State and local governments. The agency is still accountable to numerous Congressional authorization and appropriations committees. State and local governments, on the other hand, continue to conduct emergency management activities in a manner often more comprehensive and more integrated than the Federal programs designed to support them. The Integrated Emergency Management System described in this overview has been developed by FEMA as a strategy for addressing these issues within the framework of existing legislation.

FEMA has high expectations for IEMS. Recognizing that it is not an immediate panacea for all the problems facing the emergency management community, we believe that an integrated approach, encompassing all hazards, is the most effective way to accomplish FEMA's emergency management missions.

III. THE IEMS CONCEPT

FEMA is continually reassessing the delivery of program funds and technical assistance in an attempt to become more responsive to State and local emergency management needs and to reduce the number of response plans required without sacrificing program integrity. The agency believes that the most effective way to do this is through increased emphasis on developing the common and unique capabilities required to perform specific functions across the full spectrum of hazards, rather than focusing on the requirements of specific hazards. The approach FEMA is taking to accomplish this reorientation is characterized by the Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS). The goal of the system is to develop and maintain a credible emergency management capability nationwide by integrating activities along functional lines at all levels of government and, to the fullest extent possible, across all hazards.

State and local governments can begin to achieve this goal by (1) determining the hazards and magnitude of risk in a logical, consistent manner; (2) assessing the existing and required capability with respect to those hazards; and (3) establishing realistic local and State-tailored plans that lay out necessary actions for closing the gap between existing and required levels of capability. These efforts are related and must be undertaken sequentially. The identification of hazards forms the basis for assessing capability and determining the capability shortfall. The shortfall, in turn, leads to preparation of a multi-year development plan. These initial steps are the starting point for integrating emergency management activities on a multi-hazard, functional basis. It should be kept in mind that this process is a means of improving capability and is not an end in itself.

The various steps in the IEMS process, described in greater detail on the following pages, are intended to serve management at each level of government by providing basic information upon which reasonable and justifiable plans can be made and effective action can be taken to increase emergency management capability nationwide. State and local governments should begin to realize benefits from the process almost immediately. It will take time, however, to achieve total integration of emergency management activities and to develop the capabilities required to perform the functions necessary to deal effectively with all hazards. It will also take time and the results of practical experience to refine the process and to develop the best guidance to assist in its implementation. With cooperation and constructive criticism from emergency managers at all levels, we will continue to make progress toward these ends.

IV. THE IEMS PROCESS

The Integrated Emergency Management System is being introduced to a nationwide network of emergency management organizations representing thousands of jurisdictions, not all confronted by the same hazards, and not all having or requiring the same capabilities. Going through the IEMS process, therefore, will require different levels of effort by each jurisdiction and will result in the identification of different functional areas requiring attention. The process, however, is logical and applicable to all jurisdictions regardless of their size, level of sophistication, potential hazards, or current capabilities.

In order to provide a complete description of the IEMS process (see Figure 1, The Integrated Emergency Management System), each step is described below as it would apply to a jurisdiction that has done little toward developing the capability required, given its potential hazards. In some jurisdictions certain steps in the process may require only a review, following the guidance provided, to ensure consistency in the application of the process and that nothing has been overlooked.

Although IEMS underscores capability development, the process recognizes that current operations must be conducted according to existing plans and with existing resources, and that these operations can contribute to the developmental effort. The process, therefore, includes two paths: one focusing on current capabilities and activities (Steps 1-7), and the other emphasizing capability improvement (Steps 8-13).

STEP 1: Hazards Analysis Knowing what could happen, the likelihood of it happening, and having some idea of the magnitude of the problems that could arise, are essential ingredients for emergency planning. The first step, then, is for the jurisdiction to identify the potential hazards and to determine the probable impact each of those hazards could have on people and property. This task need not be complicated or highly sophisticated to provide useful results. What is important is that all hazards that pose a potential threat to the jurisdiction are identified and addressed in the jurisdiction's emergency response planning and mitigation efforts.

STEP 2: Capability Assessment The next step for the jurisdiction is to assess its current capability for dealing with the hazards that have been identified in Step 1. Current capability is determined against standards and criteria FEMA has established as necessary to perform basic emergency management functions, e.g., alerting and warning, evacuation, emergency communications. The resulting information provides a summary of the capabilities that exist and upon which current plans should be prepared (Step 3), and leads to the identification of the jurisdiction's weaknesses (Step 8).

STEP 3: Emergency Operations Plans A plan should be developed with functional annexes common to the hazards identified in Step 1. Those activities unique to specific hazards should be described separately, perhaps in appendices to the appropriate functional annexes. This approach is a departure from previous guidance which stressed development of hazard-specific plans. Existing plans should be reviewed and modified as necessary to ensure their applicability to all hazards that pose a potential threat to the jurisdiction. The exact format of the plan is less important than the assurance that the planning process considers each function from a multihazard perspective.

STEP 4: Capability Maintenance Once developed, the ability to take appropriate and effective action against any hazard must be continually maintained or it will diminish significantly over time. Plans must be updated; equipment must be serviced and tested; personnel must be trained; procedures and systems must be exercised. This is particularly important for jurisdictions that do not experience frequent, large-scale emergencies.

STEP 5: Mitigation Efforts Mitigating the potential effects of hazards should be given high priority. Resources utilized to limit the effects of a hazard, or reduce or eliminate the hazard, can minimize loss and suffering in the future. For example, proper land use management and stringent building and safety codes can lessen the effects of future disasters. Significant mitigation efforts can also reduce the level of capability needed to conduct recovery operations, thereby reducing the capability shortfall that may exist. The results of these efforts will be reflected in future hazards analyses (Step 1) and capability assessments (Step 2).

STEP 6: Emergency Operations The need to conduct emergency operations may arise at any time and must be carried out under current plans and with current resources despite the existence of plans for making improvements in the future. These operations, however, can provide an opportunity to test existing capabilities under real conditions.

STEP 7: Evaluation The outcome of the emergency operations (Step 6) should be analyzed and assessed in terms of actual vs. required capabilities and considered in subsequent updates of Steps 2 and 8. Identifying the need for future mitigation efforts should be an important part of each evaluation. Tests and exercises should be undertaken for the purpose of evaluation, especially where disasters occur infrequently.

STEP 8: Capability Shortfall The difference between current capability (Step 2) and the optimum capability reflected in the standards and criteria established by FEMA represents the capability shortfall. The areas not currently meeting the assessment criteria should receive primary consideration when preparing the jurisdiction's multi-year development plan (Step 9).

STEP 9: Multi-Year Development Plan Based on the capability shortfall identified in Step 8, the jurisdiction should prepare a multi-year development plan tailored to meet its unique situation and requirements. The plan

should outline what needs to be done to reach the desired level of capability. Ideally, this plan should cover a five-year period so that long-term development projects can be properly scheduled and adequately funded. The plan should include all emergency management projects and activities to be undertaken by the jurisdiction regardless of the funding source.

When used in conjunction with the hazards analysis and capability assessment results, these plans should be helpful in convincing local chief executives of the need for improvements and in presenting a logical, realistic schedule of the projects and activities that should be given priority over the next five years. At the State level, this information should be used to develop a Statewide multi-year plan for supporting local development efforts and in determining priority State requirements for Federal financial and technical support through Comprehensive Cooperative Agreements.

STEP 10: Annual Development Increment With the multi-year development plan serving as a framework for improving capability over time, the next step is to determine in detail what is going to be done next year. Situations change each year and perhaps more or less was accomplished the year before than had been planned. These factors should be reflected in modifications to the multi-year development plan and in determining next year's annual increment. Through this process, emergency managers can provide their local officials and State counterparts with detailed descriptions of what they plan to accomplish in the coming year and their requirements for financial and technical assistance in support of these efforts. During the initial implementation of IEMS, no major change is contemplated to reporting procedures now in effect. FEMA is exploring opportunities, however, for simplifying reporting and tracking through automation.

STEP 11: State/Local Resources State and local governments are expected to contribute financially and in-kind to capability development and maintenance efforts as they have done in the past. Some activities identified in the annual increment may be accomplished solely with local resources, while others may require State and/or Federal support. Whatever the source of funding and other support, each project and activity should represent a necessary building block in the jurisdiction's overall capability development program.

STEP 12: Federal Resources The Federal Government will continue to provide policy and procedural guidance, financial aid, technical support, and staff resources to assist State and local governments in developing and maintaining capability. FEMA's Comprehensive Cooperative Agreements with States will remain the vehicle for funding FEMA-approved projects and activities on an annual basis.

STEP 13: Annual Work Increment As capability development projects and activities are completed, the jurisdiction's capability shortfall will be reduced. These improvements will be reflected in the capability assessment

and capability shortfall (Steps 2 and 8) as the results of the process are reviewed each year. Emergency operations plans should then be revised to incorporate these improvements. Multi-year development plans also should be modified in view of these changes and the experience gained during exercises and the conduct of actual emergency operations. Each State should provide a method for recording and consolidating local annual work increments. This effort will replace the former Program Paper.

V. INTERIM GUIDANCE AND EXPECTATIONS FOR FY 1984

Three IEMS guidance documents will be provided by FEMA for use beginning in FY 1984:

- Hazards Analysis for Emergency Management (Interim Guidance)
- Emergency Management Capability Assessment (Interim Guidance)
- Multi-Year Development Planning (Interim Guidance)

This guidance will provide instructions for performing four critical steps in the IEMS process: hazards analysis (Step 1), capability assessment (Step 2), capability shortfall determination (Step 8), and multi-year development planning (Step 9).

The guidance is being released in sufficient time so that the initial results of the process can impact FEMA's FY 1985 policy decisions and FY 1986 budget formulation. Likewise, the process should begin providing State and local emergency managers with additional information to support their own budget requests. Once firmly established, the process can serve as the inter-governmental link for ensuring that State and local requirements are considered in FEMA budget requests and fund allocations.

A. Hazards Analysis for Emergency Management All jurisdictions participating in the Emergency Management Assistance Program are expected to conduct a hazards analysis considering all the factors described in the guidance. Other jurisdictions also should be encouraged by their State emergency management organization to perform this important step in the IEMS process following the guidance provided. Federally funded resources have been made available to the States through Comprehensive Cooperative Agreements to support participating local jurisdictions in this effort. State emergency management organizations may wish to receive a copy of the completed analyses from their local governments as an input to a Statewide hazards analysis and for documenting accomplishments under the Comprehensive Cooperative Agreement.

B. Emergency Management Capability Assessment This guidance will include standards for the performance of major emergency management functions and criteria for measuring the extent to which these standards have been achieved. Few if any jurisdictions are likely to meet the standards in all functional areas. Knowing the current level of capability is important, but knowing where specific deficiencies exist and what they are, is more important. Eliminating these deficiencies is most important.

The guidance will provide a simple method for assessing current capabilities and for translating the results of the assessment into projects and activities that should be reflected in the jurisdiction's multi-year development plan.

The results of the capability assessment provide both a basis for developmental planning and a measure of increased capability as the information is updated over time.

C. Multi-Year Development Planning This guidance will be addressed to the State emergency management organizations which will be required to submit a Statewide multi-year development plan to their respective FEMA regional office by May 15, 1984, covering projects and activities anticipated during FY 1985 and outyears.

Although not a Federal requirement of local governments, State emergency management organizations may wish to use or modify the guidance to collect multi-year development planning information from their local jurisdictions. Immediate benefits should accrue when emergency management coordinators use the multi-year development plans (which can be substantiated by facts identified during the hazards analysis and capability shortfall steps) to support their bids for existing State and local resources. At the national level, State and local priority requirements reflected in the plans can be considered by FEMA when allocating funds appropriated for the current year.

It is also intended that multi-year planning at all levels of government will have a significant long-range impact. Local government requirements for financial and technical assistance should be based on the jurisdiction's long-range plans for eliminating capability deficiencies. State emergency managers should consider the local development plans in view of Statewide needs and State priorities over the coming years. At the Federal level, State multi-year development plans can be analyzed and used to determine and support future budget requests.

VI. FY 1985 AND BEYOND

Experience gained through the implementation of IEMS in FY 1984 will provide the basis for refining the guidance in subsequent years. It is anticipated that additional guidance, e.g., in the areas of operations planning and mitigation, will be required. At the same time guidance is being refined, attention will be given to simplifying the mechanics of the process through the application of computer technology.

During FY 1984, FEMA will assess the feasibility and advantages of automating Steps 1, 2, 8, and 9 (hazards analysis, capability assessment, capability shortfall, and multi-year development plan) by field testing an experimental system in 40 local jurisdictions. If the test results indicate that automation is both feasible and practical, FEMA will begin initial implementation of the automated process in FY 1985 as another phase in the evolutionary development of IEMS. Conversion from the "manual" to an automated process would be accomplished with a minimum of additional effort on the part of jurisdictions having completed the initial steps in FY 1984.

An automated system could be expected to provide local jurisdictions with summary, analytical, and comparative reports in the areas of hazards analysis and capability assessment. It is also expected to provide data to assist in the preparation of multi-year development plans. Similar types of data and reports, and the ability to aggregate data, would be available at the State and Federal levels. Multi-year development plans could be stored and updated easily on an annual basis. Reviewing and updating last year's hazards analysis and capability assessment would require little effort for participating jurisdictions.

FEMA has no immediate plans to provide microcomputers or "intelligent" terminals to local jurisdictions in support of the IEMS process. Plans for implementing the automated system, should it prove feasible, and the requirements for equipment at each level of government, will not become final until late FY 1984. Regardless of the future of the automated system, the manual process and the guidance provided will continue to be refined and retained for those jurisdictions not desiring the potential advantages of automation.

THE INTEGRATED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

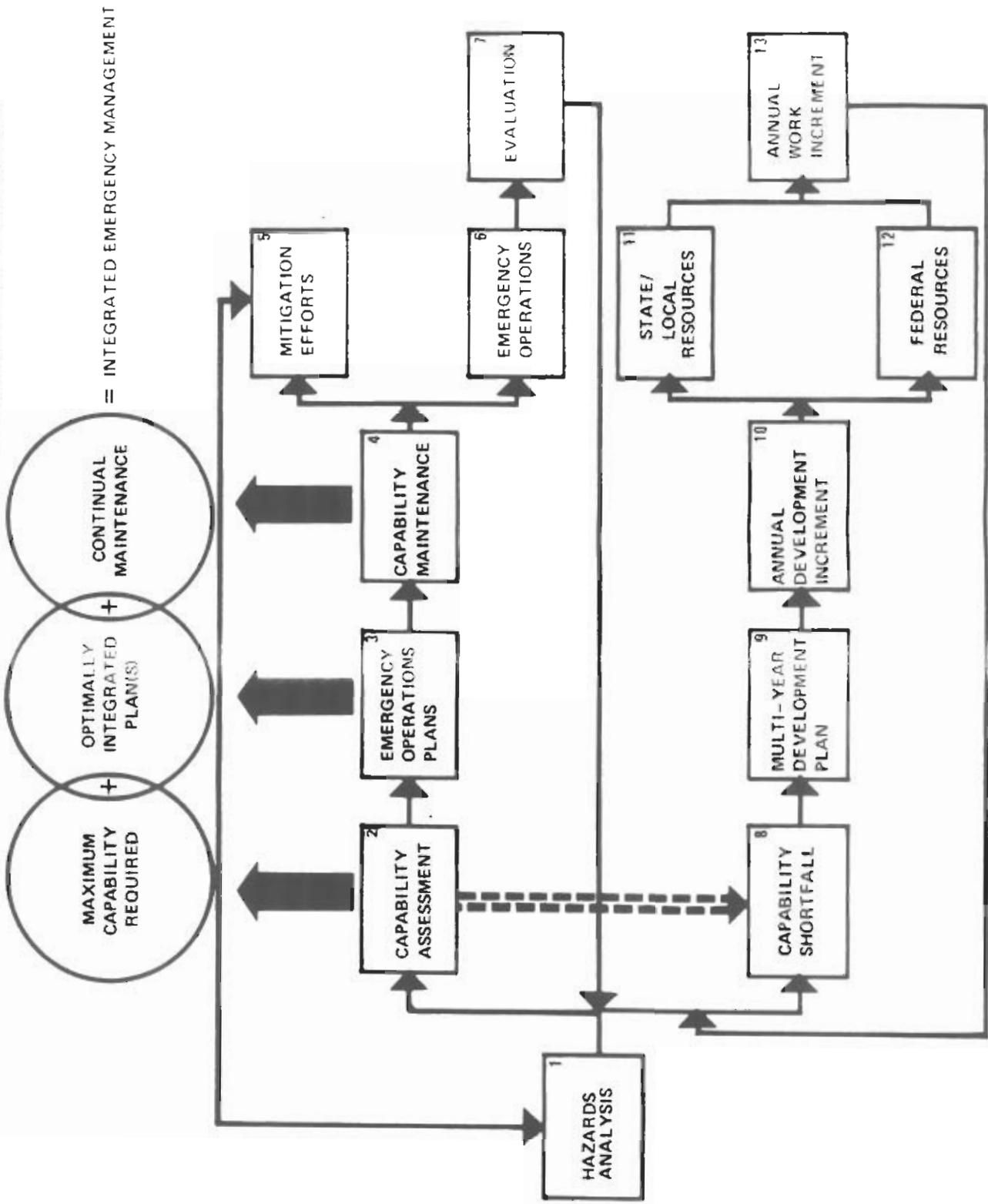


Figure 1