

VA Comprehensive Emergency Management Program

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Directive revises Department-wide policy and responsibilities for the VA Comprehensive Emergency Management Program.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This Directive addresses emergency management policies regarding planning, mitigation, response and recovery, including the continuation and rapid restoration of the Department's vital functions under all conditions.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of Operations, Security (007) and Preparedness, Office of Emergency Management (007A) is responsible for the contents of this Directive.
- 4. RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 0320 Comprehensive Emergency Management Program.
- 5. RESCISSION:** VA Directive, 0320, Comprehensive Emergency Management Program, March 24, 2005.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
Roger W. Baker
Assistant Secretary for
Information and Technology

**BY DIRECTION OF THE
SECRETARY OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
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VA Comprehensive Emergency Management Program

1. PURPOSE. This Directive provides Department-wide policy for the development, management, and administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Comprehensive Emergency Management Program. It assigns emergency preparedness and response responsibilities to all levels of Department management and provides policy for a central point of coordination for these activities within the Department and with other Departments and Agencies. Department-wide emergency planning and coordination activities are extensions of the regular missions of the Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials.

2. POLICY.

a. The Department will maintain sufficient capabilities to meet essential functions to serve our Nation's Veterans during a National emergency, including the capability to respond to the needs of individuals and State and local governments where required by law or binding Directive.

b. The Department will approach emergency response with a simultaneous and continuous two prong approach, first, to continue to maintain operational capability to provide services to our Nation's Veterans, second, to serve as a National asset in times of emergency or disaster.

c. The Department's priorities following an emergency or disaster are:

(1) Personnel accountability (ex. Veterans, employees, contractors, others on VA property).

(2) Establishing and maintaining command, control, and communication.

(3) Continuing to provide services to Veterans and to serve as a National asset.

d. The Department's Comprehensive Emergency Management Framework will address all hazards, and at a minimum, will address the following:

(1) All Hazards Emergency Response Base Framework.

(2) Incident Specific Annexes.

(3) Coordination with the Federal interagency (such as National Response Framework responsibilities).

(4) Critical Capabilities.

(5) Strategic Assets.

(6) National Incident Management System / Incident Command System.

e. VA comprehensive emergency management plans and programs will be developed and tested annually Department-wide as an integral part of VA's continuing activities.

f. This Directive is part of a “family” of preparedness policy that includes the following Directives and their associated Handbooks and Plans.

(1) VA Directive 0321 – Serious Incident Reports.

(2) VA Directive 0322 – VA Integrated Operations Center.

(3) VA Directive 0323 – VA Continuity Programs.

(4) VA Directive 0324 – VA Exercise, Training, and Evaluation Program.

g. The Department will, through the VA Integrated Operations Center (VA IOC), maintain an inventory of Strategic Assets required to meet the Critical Capabilities in the Department Comprehensive Emergency Management Framework.

h. The VA IOC will serve as the Department’s fusion center in order to provide the Secretary a single office responsible for proactively collecting, coordinating, and analyzing information in order to make recommendations to VA leadership. Additionally, the VA IOC will serve as the Department’s coordination center for emergency management utilizing the Incident Command System.

i. The VA Crisis Response Team (CRT) will serve as the Department’s Senior Leadership Principal level emergency management coordination group and will consist of the senior leaders and executives of the Administrations, Staff Offices, and Staff Organizations. The CRT will create subordinate groups as appropriate to address specific issues.

j. VA defines “readiness” as the ability to serve Veterans now, and “preparedness” as the ability to serve Veterans in times of crisis and to serve as a national asset to the United States.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs

(1) Ensures that the Department of Veterans Affairs establishes and maintains a Comprehensive Emergency Management Program.

(2) Delegates authority to ensure implementation of this Directive and all policies, roles and responsibilities herein to the Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness who is the Department's Continuity Coordinator and leads the Department's emergency management and homeland security programs.

b. Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness

(1) Ensures the development, dissemination and implementation of the Department's Comprehensive Emergency Management Program in concert with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

(2) Directs the VA emergency management programs, operations, and activities.

(3) Serves as the Department's representative to senior Federal emergency preparedness councils and committees and coordinates with appropriate VA subject matter experts to ensure a coordinated Department response.

(4) Serves as the Director of the VA CRT.

(5) Coordinates the Department's review process of proposed Federal legislation, Executive Orders, Federal plans, rule changes, and other policy documents relating to emergency management.

(6) Consults with other Federal Departments and Agencies to ensure VA policies and plans are consistent with National emergency management and homeland security policies, plans, and procedures.

(7) Serves as the VA official in charge of VA classified National security information and develops policies and procedures to ensure the proper handling, storage, and transmission of classified information.

c. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

(1) Develops an organizational emergency management plan and provide a copy to the Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness in accordance with this Directive.

(2) Serves as the representative for their respective Administration, Staff Office, or Organization to the VA CRT.

(3) Ensures resources, materials and equipment are readily available and key personnel are identified and trained to support Departmental and organizational emergency management plans.

(4) Ensures the organizational emergency management plan is exercised at least annually.

(5) Designates an individual (e.g., an Emergency Coordinator) and an alternate who can effectively represent the organization regarding the comprehensive emergency management program.

(6) Ensures applicable emergency operating, financial and legal records are identified and available.

(7) Ensures qualified and trained staffing is available to support the VA IOC during contingency operations.

d. VA Crisis Response Team

(1) Serves as the Department's leadership and coordination body to provide policy oversight during incidents and events that utilize the VA IOC and/or the VA Continuity of Operations teams.

(2) CRT Principals designate Alternates to serve on VA CRT sub-groups (ex. VA Preparedness Team).

4. REFERENCES

a. The Homeland Security Act of 2002, PL §§107-296, 6 U.S.C.101-557, November 25, 2002.

b. Department of Veterans Affairs Emergency Preparedness Act of 2002, PL 107-287, U.S.C §1785 (2003)

c. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §5121, et seq.

d. Public Law 97-174, May 4, 1982, as amended, Title 38 USC §8111A "VA and DOD Health Resources Sharing and Emergency Operations Act".

e. Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-5, February 28, 2003.

- f. National Security Presidential Directive-51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-20, National Continuity Policy, May 9, 2007.
- g. Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8), March 30, 2011.
- h. National Communications System Directive 3-10, Minimum Requirements for Continuity Communications Capabilities, July 25, 2007. (Classified Document)
- i. National Response Framework, January 2008.
- j. National Incident Management System (NIMS), December 2008.
- k. Federal Continuity Directive 1 (FCD 1), Federal Executive Branch National Continuity Program and Requirements, February 2008.