

EOC TOOL FOR INTEGRATING AIRPORT CONTINGENCY PLANS

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is the real-time congregation and interaction among the numerous incident response stakeholder leaders, departments and agencies during a contingency that can essentially define effective integration, and it can take many forms. This operational tool will help airports consider implementing a hard copy or virtual version of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) scaled to their size, staff, and resources.

This EOC educational aid answers the question, *“How can we best manage incident information, coordination, and action plans during the event itself?”* The tool also:

- Recognizes that “the EOC approach” is the best model for integrated incident management by involving the right mix of decision makers.
- Tests whether all necessary EOC functions are being addressed.
- Presents the possible configurations of effective EOCs—i.e., the right mix of “seats” (virtual, ad hoc, or physical) are occupied with airport, city/county and other stakeholder organizations.
- Addresses situational data gathering and collaborative decision-making.

Best Practices for Managing Incident Information, Coordination, and Actions in Response and Recovery

The established doctrine for the best practice of managing and coordinating actions and information flows during incidents ideally involves three elements - an EOC, one or more Command Posts, and a Senior Policy Group.

In reality, the size of the incident and the resources available to an airport often dictate that the three elements collapse into a single group or even a single individual. At a small airport, each person in the EOC will wear more than one hat and perform multiple types of functions. For this reason, the most productive approach is to work from necessary EOC functions towards a structure that is possible given the airport’s resources.

Instructions:

1. Review the essential functions of the EOC and supporting detail.
2. Note if each are addressed in your EOC, an EOC the airport uses with city/county responders, or informally in your contingency response protocol.
3. For this to work it is essential that each person filling these functions have both the appropriate FEMA training (see **FEMA Course Selection Guide**) and have had sufficient opportunities to practice the roles in seminar, tabletop, functional, and full-scale exercises (see **Summary of Exercise Types** tool).

What Are the Necessary Functions of the EOC?

The Incident Command System (ICS) provides clear guidance on the categories of functions that are likely to be required of an EOC during response to, and recovery from an incident.

Necessary Functions of the EOC		
Function	Supplemental Detail	Addressed?
Command	Unified Command, Incident Commander, Policy Group	
Operations	Operations, Situational Awareness, Communications	
Planning	Planners, Development Officer, Persons knowledgeable about infrastructure of the airport	
Logistics		
Finance/Administration	Purchasing, Procurement, Documentation	
Safety		
Liaison	Mutual Aid Partners, Commercial Development Manager (who are highly familiar with all tenants)	
Public Information	Joint Information Center, crisis communications	

For example, at a non-hub primary airport with a full-time staff of 10 employees, the airport director might perform command, planning, liaison, and public information functions while the director of operations or ARFF chief might handle operations and safety, and the office manager might handle finance/administration and logistics. In this example, three managers wearing a total of eight hats handle all eight necessary functions. For this to work it is essential that each person have both the appropriate FEMA training (**see FEMA Course Selection tool**) and have had sufficient opportunities to practice the roles in seminar, tabletop, functional, or full-scale exercises (**see Summary of Exercise Types tool**).

Possible Configurations of Effective EOCs

An airport may have one or more of these locations and types of EOCs available to it. If so, the airport should try to decide in advance which arrangement will be used for each type of incident. If an airport does not have access to any of these possibilities, it should move expeditiously to develop at least one of them. In most cases, the quickest and most economical solution will be to piggy-back on a local jurisdiction’s EOC. If this happens, joint training and exercising will become especially important.

NOTE: Regardless of the physical EOC an airport may have at the airport or have access to off-airport, it is highly advisable to have a pre-established and exercised Teams, Zoom, or Meet dedicated meeting to serve as the EOC. This will be useful if the physical EOC is damaged, inoperable, or inaccessible or if the travel time of essential personnel to reach the EOC is a problem.

During an incident key airport personnel will not want to leave the airport to go to an off-airport EOC. Those who are not at the forward command post will convene in an office or conference room with internet, phones, and suitable environment. This group would then interact with the off-airport EOC. As already stated, in this case joint training and exercising become essential.

Instructions:

1. Identify whether you have access to an on or off-airport location for your EOC.
2. Next, consider the Configuration components necessary for the effectiveness of each, adding as many lines as you need.
3. Finally, note of these elements are available or need to be newly planned for.

Possible Configurations of an Effective EOC		
Location	Specific Configuration	Available?
On-Airport	Dedicated Light-Switch EOC (Always ready to activate)	
	Dedicated EOC Space	
	Multipurpose Space Pre-wired and Pre-Equipped for EOC Use	
	Multipurpose Space with Adequate Connectivity	
	Virtual EOC/Distributed in Multiple Spaces	
	Mobile Command Post	
	Trunk-top at Command Post	
	Other (Specify):	
Off-Airport	City EOC	
	County EOC	
	Regional EOC	
	State EOC	
	Federal Partner EOC	
	Mutual Aid Partner Agency EOC	
	Mobile Command Post	
	Virtual EOC (e.g., Web EOC or dedicated Teams, Zoom or Meet channel)	
	Other (Specify):	

EOC Essential Capabilities

The airport’s EOC—whether owned by the airport or using another jurisdiction’s EOC—must have the capabilities that are essential to support situational data gathering and collaborative decision-making.

Instructions:

1. Review the fundamental and optional EOC capabilities below.
2. Note if the individual capabilities are present.
3. Add as many optional capabilities as necessary to your unique airport circumstances.

Essential Capabilities of an EOC		
Importance	Capability	Have?
Fundamental	Situational Awareness	
	Robust Internal Communications	
	Robust External Communications	
	Secure Location against Threats, Risks, and Hazards	
	Physical or Virtual Arrangement Conducive to Collaboration	
	Back-up Power Supply	
	Adequate Space	
	Comfort in Case of Long Duration Activation	
	Self-sufficiency for Water, Food, and Rest Area	

Nice to Have		
Nice to Have	Intuitive Controls	
	Private Spaces for Law Enforcement or Intelligence Interviews	

Use the combination of these three EOC component inventories to identify and locate a physical EOC you can use, newly outfit an acceptable EOC location, or devise virtual EOC capabilities.

EOC Essential Documents

The airport’s EOC will need ready access to important documents (diagrams, schematics, maps, MOUs, contract lists, etc.) to support situational data gathering and collaborative decision-making. List those documents and their physical or digital location here for easy access during contingencies:

<u>Document Name</u>	<u>Physical Location (office or file)</u>	<u>Digital Location (drive or PC)</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Other ACRP resources that may be helpful to an airport’s efforts to integrate its contingency plans are:

- ACRP Report 189 *Design Considerations for Airport EOCs*.