

Regional Emergency Management Committee
Statewide Implementation Guidance

Background

In July 2021, regional Local Emergency Planning Committees were replaced with one statewide Local Emergency Planning Committee. As noted in statute (Sec. 12. 20 V.S.A. § 6) the Emergency Management Division will establish Regional Emergency Management Committees which “shall coordinate emergency planning and preparedness activities to improve their regions’ ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all disasters.”

The Division of Emergency Management is charged with establishing “geographic boundaries and guidance documents for regional emergency planning committees in coordination with regional planning commissions and mutual aid associations.” This document serves as that establishment of geographic boundaries and guidance document.

September 2, 2021 through November 1, 2021 shall serve as a transition period. During this period, Regional Planning Commissions shall work with towns and cities to identify voting members and work with those voting members to create the Regional Implementation Plan. This regional implementation plan shall be submitted to Vermont Emergency Management by November 1, 2021. Additional details about this Regional Implementation Plan are available in the “Regional Implementation” section of this document.

Geographic Boundaries

Regional Emergency Management Committees will follow the existing Regional Planning Commission boundaries, except for Northeastern Vermont Development Association and Northwest Regional Planning Commission where 2 Regional Emergency Management Committees will exist within their boundaries. A map of these boundaries is available in the back of this guidance document.

Membership

Voting Members: The Local Emergency Management Director and one emergency services representative from each town and city in the region shall serve as the voting members of the committee.

The town’s or city’s executive or legislative branch shall appoint the local Emergency Management Director and one representative from the town’s or city’s emergency services community and notify the Regional Planning Commission of these appointments. The local Emergency Management Director may appoint a designee to serve as the Emergency Management representative for their town (for example – the Emergency Management Director may appoint the Emergency Management Coordinator to be the town Emergency Management representative on the Regional Emergency Management Committee). The local Emergency Management Director or emergency services representative may designate the other board member in their city or town to serve as their proxy, but must notify the Regional Planning Commission in writing prior to the meeting in which the proxy designation is made.

Quorum is defined as a majority of voting members, including proxies, being present. Voting members may span multiple cities and towns, and their attendance counts towards quorum for each town they represent. Votes of the Regional Emergency Management Committee require a majority of the voting members to be present. If quorum is not reached, informational meetings may be held but no decisions can be made. Minutes must still be published after an informational meeting.

Non-voting members: Nonvoting members may include representatives from the following organizations serving within the region: fire departments; emergency medical services; law enforcement; media; transportation;

regional planning commissions; hospitals; the Department of Health's district office; the Division of Emergency Management; organizations serving vulnerable populations; and any other interested public or private individual or organization.

Structure

Voting members shall annually elect a chair and vice chair of the committee from the voting membership. The Chair shall develop a meeting schedule, agenda, and facilitate each meeting. The Vice Chair shall fill in for the Chair during the Chair's absence.

Administrative services will be performed by the Regional Planning Commissions, paid for by Vermont Emergency Management. These duties include supporting the Chair, maintaining a list of voting and non-voting members, securing meeting space, advertising meetings and agendas, taking & disseminating minutes, and documenting the Regional Emergency Management Committee decisions in the Regional Plan & submitting the regional plan to Vermont Emergency Management.

As a public body, Regional Emergency Management Committees are subject to Open Meeting Laws. Per the Vermont Secretary of State's Office, "In general, the law requires public bodies to:

- Provide advance public notice of meetings, including meeting agendas.
- Discuss all business and take all actions in open meeting, unless an exception in statute applies.
- Allow members of the public to attend and participate in meetings.
- Take meeting minutes and make them available to the public"¹

1 V.S.A. § 312(a)(2) notes that meetings subject to open meeting law must have a physical location where members of the public can attend. Meetings may be held as hybrid, where there is a physical location that the public can attend but the meeting is also available virtually.

Responsibilities of each Regional Emergency Management Committee

- Coordinate and support regional all-hazards emergency management activities, including planning, training & exercising.
- Regional Emergency Management Committees shall meet at least quarterly.
- Members shall develop and maintain a regional plan, following guidance and the template provided by Vermont Emergency Management, and submit it to their Vermont Emergency Management Regional Coordinator annually by June 1st. This plan will describe regional coordination and regionally available resources. Appendix B of this guidance document includes the template for this plan.
- 1 individual, elected from membership, shall represent the Regional Emergency Management Committee on the statewide Local Emergency Planning Committee. This individual will receive information about Hazardous Materials within their region and share it with Regional Emergency Management Committee members. This responsibility will be assumed by the Regional Emergency Management Committee upon formation.
- 1 individual, elected from membership, shall represent the Regional Emergency Management Committee in the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Stakeholder Preparedness Review. This individual will report on the current capabilities and gaps in the region's response to threats/hazards. This responsibility will be assumed by the Regional Emergency Management Committee in 2022.
 - Discussions held by the Regional Emergency Management Committee regarding the Stakeholder Preparedness Review may be held in executive session. In the event the Regional Emergency Management Committee receives a Public Records Act request relating to the release of Stakeholder Preparedness Review or other security related documents that originate with Vermont Emergency Management, the Regional Emergency Management Committee will inform

¹"Open Meetings." *Municipal Division*, Vermont Secretary of State, 12-08-2021, <https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/open-meetings/>

Vermont Emergency Management who will adjudicate these requests to assist the Regional Emergency Management Committee.

- 1 individual, elected from membership, shall represent the Regional Emergency Management Committee in the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop. This individual will report on the plans, trainings, & exercises needed or planned for the region over the next 3 years. This responsibility will be assumed by the Regional Emergency Management Committee in 2022.
- Create and maintain bylaws. Bylaws should document meeting procedures including the name of this Regional Emergency Management Committee, rules of the meeting, what constitutes a quorum, and voting procedures.
 - Voting procedures:
 - Voting is required for financial matters of the Regional Emergency Management Committee, electing of officers, and electing individuals to represent the Regional Emergency Management Committee. Informal appointments of officers and representatives of the Regional Emergency Management Committee may be made up until June 1, 2022.
 - Matters that require a vote of the Regional Emergency Management Committee must be voted upon by the majority of Regional Emergency Management Committee voting members. Voting proxies may be delegated to the other board member within the represented city or town.

Support

Administrative support will be provided to the Regional Emergency Management Committee by the Regional Planning Commissions, through funding provided by Vermont Emergency Management.

Technical assistance will be provided to the Regional Emergency Management Committee by the Vermont Emergency Management Regional Coordinators. This technical assistance may include facilitating plan development workshops, instructing trainings, and coordinating exercises.

Hazmat information (mapping, new facility identification) will be provided to the Regional Emergency Management Committee by the statewide Local Emergency Planning Committee and State Emergency Response Commission.

For specific projects identified to close capability gaps, Regional Emergency Management Committees may have access to competitive grant funding including, but not limited to, Homeland Security Grant Program and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs. At the time of application, Regional Emergency Management Committees will determine a fiscal agent, and may create a Memorandum of Understanding between those contributing funding or benefiting from the project.

Regional Implementation

As the transition is made from Regional Local Emergency Planning Committees to Regional Emergency Management Committees, each Regional Emergency Management Committee will make and document the following regional implementation decisions. These activities will be coordinated by Regional Planning Commissions, with input from the members of the Regional Emergency Management Committee.

Outreach: Create a plan to reach out to towns and cities to identify voting members (the Emergency Management Director and one emergency services representative) and non-voting members (individuals from the broader Emergency Management community in the Region) to advertise the new group/meeting.

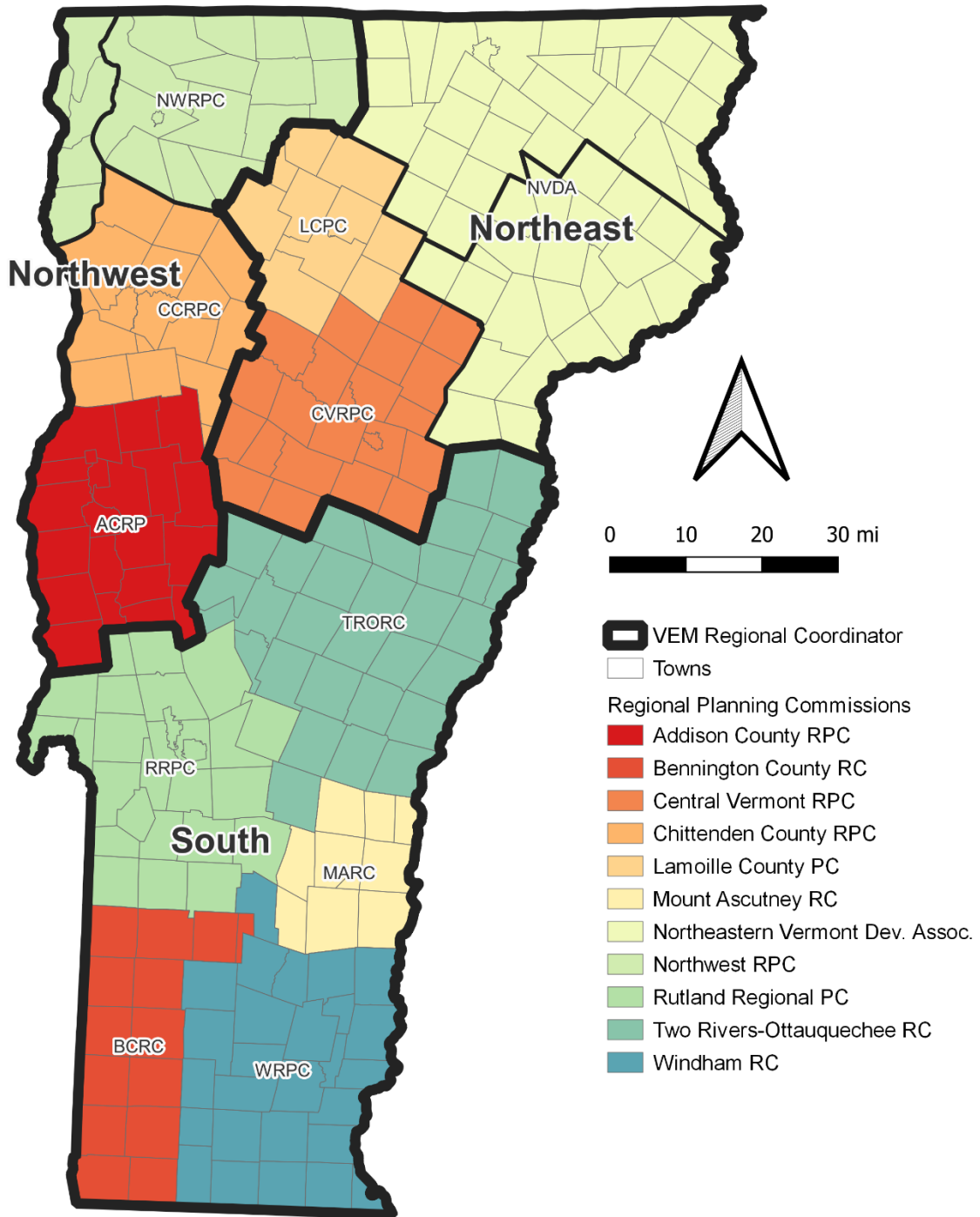
Meeting Frequency: Decide on the meeting frequency. Meetings must be held at least quarterly, but some Regional Emergency Management Committees will wish to meet more frequently. A determination of this

frequency is necessary to ensure enough support is available for the next fiscal year. Informational meetings, held when quorum cannot be reached, count as meeting for the purposes of this document.

Transition: The existing regional Local Emergency Planning Committees may have outstanding tasks that will not be completed before July 1. If applicable, the Regional Emergency Management Committees should identify the items being worked on by the regional Local Emergency Planning Committee that will be continued by the Regional Emergency Management Committee. Those that will not be continued by the Regional Emergency Management Committee will be shared with the representative to the new statewide Local Emergency Planning Committee.

Prioritization: Identify and prioritize the initial work to be performed by the Regional Emergency Management Committee. This may include outstanding items from the existing regional Local Emergency Planning Committees, as well as new items identified by the members of the Regional Emergency Management Committee.

Appendix A: Regional Emergency Management Committee Boundaries



Brett Pierce - VEM
09/02/2021

Act 166 Inventory

Municipality	Law Enforcement Provider	Fire Services Provider	Emergency Medical Services Provider	Dispatch Services	Public Safety Mutual Aid Agreement <i>(yes/no – if yes, include link to plan)</i>	Date Adopted	Members of Agreement	Public Safety Plan <i>(yes/no – if yes, include link to plan)</i>	Date Adopted	Notes