

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Vermont State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) is an all-hazards plan addressing Vermont's hazard and threat environment, including natural, technological, and human-caused emergencies or disasters. The SEMP forms the basis of the State of Vermont emergency management system, which includes the collaboration of all state agencies and departments that have operational responsibilities and capabilities across the all five Mission Areas—Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. The SEMP provides the framework by which incident management activities should be conducted on a statewide basis, including on a local level. The SEMP integrates, supports, and is consistent with all applicable federal and state guidance and utilizes the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a basis for the structure. The SEMP, as the core plan for state-level incident management, is always in effect.

Background and Summary of Major Changes

The SEMP replaces the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP), which was endorsed by Governor Shumlin in 2013. This revision builds on lessons learned during disaster responses, best practices, and the revised NIMS doctrine released in October 2017. Further, the revision focused on ensuring that the SEMP is streamlined and more operational, helping to ensure that the documents are informative, easy to understand, and able to be put into practice.

In particular, the 2018 SEMP builds in the following changes/improvements:

- Incorporation of specific Mission Area Plans focused on Recovery, Response, Prevention and Protection, and Hazard Mitigation. Organizing the SEMP according to mission areas enables readers to more easily access information, as well as ensures that all mission areas are sufficiently represented.
- Addition of a Prevention and Protection Mission Area Plan, which involves a more detailed and comprehensive technological and human-caused hazards identification and risk assessment. Creation of this document involved input from a variety of subject matter experts and other stakeholders to better identify these risks.
- A complete revision of the 2013 State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP), which incorporated a much broader planning process than previous iterations to better integrate the work of state agencies with those of regional and local governments and non-profit and private partners, as well as updated mitigation actions presented.
- Revision of the Response and Recovery components to make them more operational. These plans were refined to provide more specific guidance and more clearly elaborate coordination and organizational structures.
- Inclusion of Partner Annexes, which consolidate and streamline the roles and responsibilities of partners across all mission areas, providing partners with a single source of information instead of their roles and responsibilities being divided among various annexes.
- A revised State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) organizational structure in line with the new NIMS doctrine and the objectives of the Vermont SEOC. This revised organizational structure takes into account lessons learned and builds in mechanisms for improved information collection, analysis, and dissemination.

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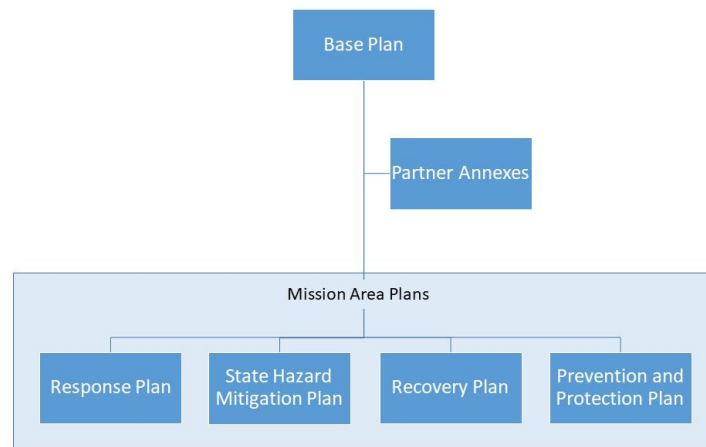
SEMP Structure and Purpose

The SEMP is based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Preparedness Goal, which describes the nation's approach to preparing for threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the country. This is achieved by:

- **Prevention:** Prevent, avoid or stop an imminent, threatened or actual act of terrorism.
- **Protection:** Protect our citizens, residents, visitors and assets against the greatest threats and hazards in a manner that allows our interests, aspirations and way of life to thrive.
- **Mitigation:** Reduce the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of future disasters.
- **Response:** Respond quickly to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs in the aftermath of a catastrophic incident.
- **Recovery:** Recover through a focus on the timely restoration, strengthening and revitalization of infrastructure, housing and a sustainable economy, as well as the health, social, cultural, historic and environmental fabric of communities affected by a catastrophic incident.

Utilizing the National Preparedness Goal as a guiding framework, the SEMP is a collection of documents that includes: the Base Plan, Mission Area Plans, Partner Annexes, and Supporting Documents. Together, these documents form a reference of disaster information and the basic source of data necessary to accomplish the various types of emergency missions that could confront Vermont. The SEMP is designed to enable the user to know what is to be done and who is to do it, and may include information relative to when and where response or recovery activities will be concentrated.

Figure 1: Main Components of the SEMP



SEMP COMPONENTS

The Base Plan

The Base Plan serves as the foundation for all annexes and appendices of the SEMP. It describes the overall state structure, concept of operations, and roles and responsibilities comprising the statewide approach to emergency management. The Base Plan is designed to integrate the efforts and resources of local, state, private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and, if necessary, the federal government. The Base Plan is intended for all stakeholders that are or could potentially be involved in emergency management in Vermont.

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The Response Mission Area Plan

The Response Mission Area Plan provides an overview of how Vermont responds to disasters and emergencies. This includes the roles and responsibilities and coordinating structures that enable the state to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred. In particular, the Response Mission Area Plan provides an overview of how the SEOC is structured, how coordination and information and resource request flows occur among stakeholders during a response, how the SEOC is activated, and markers for the transition from response to recovery.

The Recovery Mission Area Plan

The Recovery Mission Area Plan establishes the policies that the state will implement to coordinate immediate and long-term recovery efforts for rebuilding and revitalizing affected communities following a disaster. The plan clarifies the actions that state partners must take to support the recovery of their own operations and those of local jurisdictions and service providers. It also describes processes and mechanisms for requesting and using federal recovery assistance programs, such as Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act Declarations for Public Assistance and/or Individual Assistance. The Recovery Mission Area Plan emphasizes that recovery efforts should not wait until response efforts have concluded and provides mechanisms for devoting staff to recovery planning and preparation as early as possible in an incident to facilitate the transition from response to recovery.

The Prevention and Protection Plan

The Prevention and Protection Plan defines and provides information on the range of technological and human-caused hazards that could affect Vermont and the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and non-governmental partners that are most likely to be involved in these mission areas. Utilizing input from subject matter experts and other stakeholders, the plan provides an overview of 10 technological and human-caused threats and hazards that could affect the state and ranks the probability of the events based on perceived vulnerability, as well as potential impacts. This information serves to help state and local partners better understand the risks and vulnerabilities within Vermont and take actions to reduce these risks. This plan complements the SHMP, which focuses on natural hazards, and together they form the basis of the State of Vermont's Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA).

The State Hazard Mitigation Plan

The impact of anticipated yet unpredictable natural events can be reduced through community planning and implementation of cost effective, preventative mitigation efforts. The SHMP was developed to help the State of Vermont and local governments identify all natural hazards facing our communities and establish actions that reduce risk. The SHMP also serves as a resource for state agencies and other resilience stakeholders to better understand Vermont's exposure to natural hazards and collectively implement actions that reduce our vulnerability. A large network of stakeholders across Vermont worked together to develop the capabilities and actions described in the plan and will continue to work on implementation over the next five years. On October 18, 2018, the Governor's Authorized Representative adopted the 2018 Vermont SHMP, with FEMA Region 1 approval expected November 18, 2018.

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Partner Annexes

Partner Annexes establish general guidance for state agencies or other partners with a primary responsibility during response and/or recovery. The Partner Annexes contain the overarching authorities, responsibilities, policies, and procedures that define the role of each respective organization. These annexes serve to inform staff, as well as state leadership, of the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of each partner in emergency situations.

Supporting Documents

The broader range of SEMP-supporting documents include strategic, operational, tactical, and incident specific or hazard-specific contingency plans and procedures. These include:

- Support Annexes: Support Annexes describe the framework through which state agencies, the private sector, and NGOs coordinate and execute common emergency management strategies.
- Incident Annexes: These documents describe protocols and agency roles and responsibilities for specific contingencies, such as catastrophic incidents, drought management, and cyber incidents, among others.
- Task Force Annexes: Task Force Annexes describe the mission, members, roles, and responsibilities of each of the recovery support functions. These annexes guide the implementation of the Recovery Mission Area Plan.
- Implementing Instructions: Each Annex, as well as the Base Plan and Mission Area Plans, may include implementing instructions in the form of standard operating procedures, standard operating guidelines, operations manuals, maps, charts, tables, forms, and or checklists as attachments or references.

As the core emergency management plan for Vermont, the SEMP also incorporates relevant portions of state partner internal plans, regional plans, local emergency management plans, local hazard mitigation plans, private sector plans, volunteer and NGO plans, and international plans as supporting plans or operational supplements.

Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

As noted above, the impact of natural, technological, and human-caused events can be reduced through emergency management planning. That planning must be grounded in the rational evaluation of the hazards and the risks they pose in order to prioritize actions designed to mitigate their effects.

The SEMP includes a HIRA covering 24 natural, human-caused, and technological hazards of concern for Vermont. These hazards were identified following an extensive stakeholder engagement process, which involved evaluation of historical data, consideration of changing climate trends (in the case of natural hazards), input from subject matter experts, and feedback from stakeholders across the state.

Additional information on natural hazard impacts can be found in the 2018 SHMP and further detail on technological and human-caused hazards can be found in the Prevention and Protection Mission Area Plan.

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Figure 2: State Hazards of Concern

Natural Hazards	Technological & Human-Caused Hazards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fluvial Erosion - Inundation Flooding - Ice - Snow - Wind - Heat - Cold - Drought - Landslides - Wildfire - Earthquake - Invasive Species - Infectious Disease Outbreak - Hail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cyber-Based Incident - Hazardous Materials - Known and Emerging Contaminants - Incursion of a High Consequence Livestock Disease - Aging Infrastructure - Transportation-Based Accident - Civil Disturbance - Terrorism/Mass Violence - Long-Term Utility Outage - Conflagration

Roles and Responsibilities

Disaster preparedness, response, and recovery is a whole-of-government responsibility. The capability to fulfill the roles and responsibilities necessary is an expected task to be undertaken by all emergency management partners at all levels of government and in both the private and public sectors, including individuals and households.

The SEMP identifies the roles and responsibilities of the wide variety of stakeholders involved in disaster response, recovery, prevention and protection, and mitigation at the local, state, and federal levels. This includes the roles and responsibilities of: the Governor; the Director of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM); Regional Planning Commissions; State Emergency Response Commission and Local Emergency Planning Committees; state agencies, departments, and partners; federal government agencies; Emergency Management Directors/Coordinators; local department heads; non-governmental and volunteer organizations; the private sector; and individuals and households.

Responsibilities of note for this Executive Summary include:¹

Governor:

As the state’s chief executive, the Governor is responsible for the safety and welfare of the people of Vermont. The Governor:

- Is responsible for coordinating state resources across all five mission areas in an all-hazards context.
- In accordance with state law, may make, amend, or suspend certain orders or regulations associated with response.

¹ The information below is not a complete list of roles and responsibilities. Please see the Base Plan for the full list.

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- Provides leadership and plays a key role in communicating to the public and in helping people, businesses, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of declared emergency within state jurisdiction.
- Encourages participation in mutual aid and implements authorities for the state to enter into mutual aid agreements with other states and Canadian provinces to facilitate resource-sharing.
- Is the Commander-in-Chief of the state military forces (the National Guard when in State Active Duty or Title 32 Status and the Vermont State Guard).
- Requests federal assistance when it becomes clear that state capabilities will be insufficient or have been exceeded or exhausted.

Director of VEM:

The Director of VEM ensures that the state is prepared to respond and recover from emergencies and incidents beyond the capability of local jurisdictions across all mission areas. He or she will:

- Coordinate the activities of all emergency management organizations operating within the state.
- Liaise and cooperate with emergency management agencies and organizations of the federal government, other states, and Canada.
- Activate the SEOC.

State Agencies, Departments, and Partners:

State agency and department heads and their staff develop, plan, and train to internal policies and procedures to meet Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery needs as identified in the SEMP, including Partner Annexes and other supporting documents. Training includes not only what may be accomplished within the agency or department, but multi-level, interagency training and exercises to develop and maintain necessary capabilities.

As outlined in the Base Plan, certain SEOC partners also have specified roles in executing functional responsibilities in response and recovery operations. Specifically, these partners:

- Maintain a roster of three to five individuals to act and make decisions on behalf of the agency during emergencies/disasters. These individuals have the responsibility to be trained in SEOC procedures and systems.
- Develop and maintain plans and/or procedures for accomplishing responsibilities assigned in the SEMP.
- Develop and maintain relationships with private organizations and associations that possess resources or capabilities for assistance.
- Ensure that their procedures and available resources for their roles in emergency management are current.
- Coordinate additional partners to execute functional responsibilities.

The following partners have primary functional responsibilities during an emergency or disaster response and recovery in the following areas:

- Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD): Long-Term Community Recovery, Economic and Community Development, Historical and Cultural Restoration, and Housing
- Agency of Digital Services (ADS): Communications
- Agency of Human Services (AHS): Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services and Individual and Family Needs

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- Agency of Transportation (AOT): Transportation, Public Works and Engineering, and Infrastructure and Environmental Restoration
- American Red Cross (ARC): Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services
- Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS): Logistics Support and Donations and Volunteer Management
- Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC): Public Works and Engineering, Agricultural and Natural Resources, and Debris Management
- Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation (FPR): Firefighting and Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Department of Public Safety (DPS) Wilderness Search and Rescue (WSAR): Search and Rescue
- Division of Fire Safety (DFS): Public Works and Engineering, Firefighting, Search and Rescue, and Oil and Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Response
- Department of Public Service (PSD): Communications and Energy
- Radio Technology Services (RTS): Communications
- SerVermont: Logistics Support and Donations and Volunteer Management
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM): Agriculture and Natural Resources and Agricultural Restoration
- Vermont Department of Health (VDH): Public Health and Medical Services
- Vermont Emergency Management (VEM): Information and Planning, Long-Term Community Recovery, and External Affairs
- Vermont National Guard (Office of the Adjutant General): Military Support for Multiple Functional Areas²
- Vermont State Police (VSP): Public Safety and Security

Additional information on roles and responsibilities can be found in the Base Plan and Mission Area Plans, as well as Partner Annexes.

Plan Maintenance

The Director of VEM will authorize and issue changes to the SEMP until it is superseded. The Base Plan and Mission Area Plans will be reviewed annually or after any incident in which they are used and will be subject to revision every five years unless incidents or other events dictate otherwise. Partners have the responsibility for maintaining annexes, appendices, standard operating procedures, implementing procedures, notification lists, and resource data to ensure prompt and effective response to emergencies.

² This could include Communications, Logistics Support, Transportation, Public Safety and Security, Energy, Search and Rescue, Public Works and Engineering, Oil and HAZMAT Response, and Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services.