

## FOREWORD

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) maintains the *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan* (COVEOP) and presents the plan to the Governor for adoption once every four years, at a minimum. The Governor issued Executive Order 50 in August 2012 to adopt the current published full version of the COVEOP.

The COVEOP Basic Plan, developed by VDEM, in coordination with other state agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector partners (PSPs), continues to align with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), as well as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) *National Response Framework* (NRF) and the *National Disaster Recovery Framework* (NDRF). In addition, the COVEOP Basic Plan and its appendices, Emergency Support Function Annexes, and Support and Hazard Specific Annexes have been modified to incorporate lessons learned from exercises, training, incidents, and events.

## PREFACE

Virginia is vulnerable to a variety of hazards as identified in the *Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan*. A planned and coordinated response on the part of state and local officials in support of responders in the field can save lives, protect property, and more quickly restore essential services. The emergency management mission of the Commonwealth, in cooperation with local governments, federal agencies, NGOs, and PSPs, is to provide a solid foundation for emergency planning and preparedness, establish the organizational framework, operational concepts and procedures designed to minimize the loss of life and property, expedite the restoration of essential services, and assist the public in their return to a state of normalcy following an emergency or disaster situation.

The *Code of Virginia*, § 44-146.13 to 44-146.28:1, establishes legal authority for development and maintenance of the Commonwealth's Emergency Management Program and organization, and defines the emergency powers, authorities, and responsibilities of the Governor and State Coordinator of Emergency Management (hereafter referred to as State Coordinator). Moreover, the *Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws* require that state and local governments develop and maintain current emergency operations plans (EOPs) in order to be prepared for a variety of natural and human-caused hazards. Executive Orders by the Governor supplement the laws and establish specific planning initiatives and requirements.

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

The strategies and objectives of the Commonwealth's Emergency Management Program are established in several plans including:

- *Secure Commonwealth Strategic Plan*, maintained under the authority of the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, is a multi-year plan that sets the overall course and direction of Commonwealth Preparedness, including the emergency management program, by defining its vision, mission, goals, and objectives.
- *Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP)*, maintained by VDEM, including hazard specific and support annexes, is an all-discipline, all-hazards plan that establishes a single, comprehensive framework for the management of statewide events.
- The *Commonwealth of Virginia Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resiliency Strategic Plan*, maintained by the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, supports the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) by establishing a coordinated approach to national priorities, goals, and requirements for critical infrastructure and key resource protection. The strategic plan requires the development of sector specific plans (SSPs) to provide the means by which the NIPP is implemented across all critical infrastructure and key resources sectors.
- The *Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan*, maintained by VDEM, identifies hazards and analyzes the risk and potential impacts. The plan focuses on reducing the long-term vulnerability to identified hazards by establishing interim and long-term goals, objectives, and actions.
- The *Recovery and Mitigation Standard Operating Guide* describes the state framework and associated actions to be taken in the establishment, operations, and demobilization of a Joint Field Office and Area Coordinating Officers, to deliver disaster assistance and support throughout all phases of recovery in a timely and effective manner.

- The *Commonwealth of Virginia Administrative Plan for the Public Assistance Grant Program* identifies the roles, responsibilities, processes, and procedures for administering the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance program.
- Other hazard specific plans developed by individual agencies to address specific incidents or pursuant to federal guidance.
- Agency strategic plans that focus on prioritized actions including the functions of each agency, which are critical to the emergency response and recovery operations of the Commonwealth.
- Agency continuity plans that address an agency's ability to continue to provide essential government functions in the event of a disruption. Plans include orders of succession, delegations of authority, and essential records, systems, and equipment. They also address the procedures for restoring essential government functions, including those that are critical to emergency response and recovery operations.

## COMPONENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

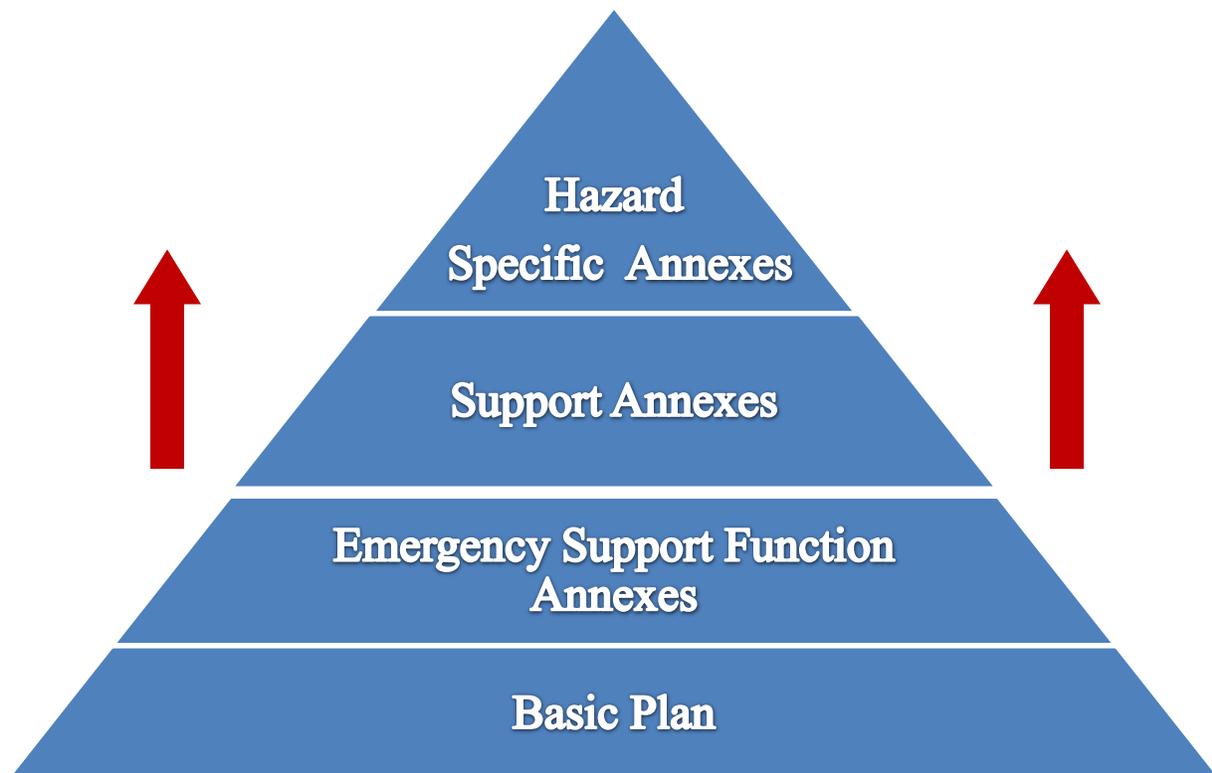
**The Basic Plan** uses an all-hazards approach to incident management. It describes the concepts and structures of response and recovery operations, identifies agencies and coordinating NGOs and PSPs with lead and support emergency management functions, and defines emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation responsibilities of local governments. The Basic Plan also includes the Governor's Executive Order promulgating the COVEOP and the Record of Changes section to document updates made between promulgation years and approved by the Governor or State Coordinator, as appropriate. There are seventeen (17) Emergency Support Function Annexes, five (5) Support Annexes, and seven (7) Hazard Specific Annexes to the Basic Plan.

**Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) Annexes** provide the structure for state coordinated emergency operations in support of affected local governments, individuals, and businesses. The annexes identify lead and supporting agencies, NGOs and PSPs, and explain in general terms how the Commonwealth will organize and implement support functions. Agencies, NGOs, or PSPs are assigned to lead or support the ESFs based on authorities, resources, and capabilities.

**Support Annexes** address those functions that may be applicable to every type of incident and provide support for all ESFs. They describe the framework through which state agencies, NGOs, and PSPs coordinate and execute the common functional processes and administrative requirements necessary to ensure efficient and effective incident management.

**Hazard Specific Annexes** address contingency or hazard situations requiring specialized response and recovery procedures. They describe policies, situations, concepts of operations and responsibilities pertinent to incidents such as radiological emergencies, hurricanes, public health threats like pandemic influenza, terrorism incidents, technological hazards, and large-scale hazardous-materials incidents.

## COVEOP COMPONENT RESPONSE DIAGRAM



The diagram above demonstrates the process in which the four components of the COVEOP are activated. The Basic Plan, forming the foundation, is always activated during an incident. As the state's response grows, select ESF annexes are called upon to support specific missions. Support annexes may then be implemented to supplement actions carried out under the Basic Plan and ESFs. Located at the top of the pyramid are Hazard Specific Annexes, which play an important role during the state's response to particular incidents. These comprehensive, incident-specific documents address enhanced response actions not identified in the Basic Plan and underlying ESFs.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

FOREWORD ..... i

PREFACE ..... ii

**Basic Plan**

I. INTRODUCTION ..... 1

A. Purpose ..... 1  
B. Scope & Applicability ..... 1  
C. Situation and Planning Assumptions ..... 2  
D. Policies ..... 4

II. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT ..... 5

III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE ..... 5

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS ..... 7

A. Notification ..... 8  
B. Alert & Warning ..... 9  
C. Activation of the VERT ..... 9  
D. Response Actions ..... 9  
E. Assess Damage and Analyze Impact ..... 10  
F. Request for Federal Assistance Under the Stafford Act ..... 11  
G. Recovery Actions ..... 11  
H. Mitigation Actions ..... 13

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ..... 13

A. State Government ..... 13  
B. Local Government ..... 16  
C. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) ..... 17  
D. Private Sector Partners (PSPs) ..... 17

VI. PLAN MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE ..... 18

A. Coordination ..... 18  
B. COVEOP Maintenance ..... 19  
C. Standards for other Commonwealth Emergency Plans ..... 20  
D. Plan Testing, Training, and Exercises ..... 20  
E. Plan Implementation ..... 20

VII. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES ..... 21

### **Appendices to the Basic Plan**

- A. Key Terms & Definitions
- B. Acronyms
- C. Authorities & References
- D. Disaster Declarations
- E. VERT Matrix
- F. Governor's Executive Order Promulgating the COVEOP
- G. Record of Changes

### **Emergency Support Function Annexes**

- 1. Transportation
- 2. Communications
- 3. Public Works & Engineering
- 4. Firefighting
- 5. Emergency Management
- 6. Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, & Human Services
- 7. Logistics Management & Resource Support
- 8. Public Health & Medical Services
- 9. Search & Rescue
- 10. Oil & Hazardous Materials Response
- 11. Agriculture & Natural Resources
- 12. Energy
- 13. Public Safety & Security
- 14. Recovery & Mitigation
- 15. External Affairs
- 16. Military Affairs
- 17. Volunteer & Donations Management

### **Support Annexes**

1. Continuity of Government
2. Recovery Programs
3. Finance & Administration
4. Mass Care & Sheltering
5. Evacuation & Re-entry

### **Hazard Specific Annexes**

1. Radiological Emergency Response
2. Terrorism Consequence Management (restricted)
3. Hurricane & Tropical Storm Response
4. Pandemic Influenza Response
5. Hazardous Materials Response
6. Technological Hazards Response (restricted)
7. Earthquake Response

**THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The COVEOP provides the coordinating structures, processes, and mechanisms in a collective framework for the coordination of state support to affected local governments, individuals, and businesses. It is compatible with the NRF and NDRF, and provides the structure for coordinating with the federal government in the delivery of federal disaster assistance. The COVEOP supports the emergency management mission of the Commonwealth by improving the capability to respond to and recover from natural and human-caused disasters.

### A. Purpose

The Basic Plan of the COVEOP is the foundation of the state's emergency response and recovery organization. This plan identifies the role of state government and coordinating NGOs and PSPs before, during, and after a disaster, large-scale emergency, or event affecting Virginia. It establishes the concepts and policies under which all elements of state government and coordinating NGOs and PSPs will operate during emergencies. It also provides the framework within which more detailed emergency plans or procedures can be developed and maintained by state agencies, local governments, NGOs, and PSPs.

To ensure the state's capability to implement this plan, (pursuant to *Code of Virginia* §2.2-222.1 E-F) each state agency tasked with essential emergency management responsibilities shall develop and maintain response plans in support of the COVEOP. In addition, executive branch agencies and institutions of higher education are required (pursuant to Executive Order #41, 2011) to develop and maintain an all hazards continuity plan that identifies the critical and time-sensitive functions, applications, and processes of the agency to be recovered and continued in an emergency or disaster, including alternate operating capabilities. Agency functions critical to the state emergency response and recovery operations shall have restoration priority.

Top priorities for incident management are to:

- Save lives and protect the health and safety of the public, responders, and recovery workers.
- Protect property and mitigate damages and impacts to individuals, communities, and the environment.
- Protect and restore critical infrastructure and key resources. Facilitate recovery of individuals, businesses, communities, governments, and the environment.
- Manage public expectations regarding response and recovery activities.

### B. Scope & Applicability

The COVEOP covers the full range of complex and constantly changing requirements in anticipation of or in response to threats or acts of terrorism, major disasters, other emergencies, and events within or affecting the Commonwealth.

The COVEOP establishes interagency, multi-jurisdictional, and public/private mechanisms for state agency involvement in domestic incident management operations. These mechanisms include coordinating structures and processes for incidents requiring:

- Local-to-local support through Statewide Mutual Aid (SMA).

- State support to cities, counties, and the towns of Chincoteague, Christiansburg, Farmville, South Boston, and Vinton.
- State-to-state support through Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) agreements or other appropriate instruments.
- Public and private sector incident management integration.

This plan is applicable to all agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and coordinating NGOs and PSPs that may be requested to provide assistance or conduct operations in response to an incident or event. Depending on the severity of the incident or event, the governor may declare an emergency or determine that state emergency management coordination is required in order to protect or save lives, prevent or minimize property or environmental impacts, or otherwise assist affected areas. Moreover, this plan also provides the foundation for the organization and coordination of community recovery and mitigation activities.

### C. Situation and Planning Assumptions

The Commonwealth is 42,767 square miles and comprised of 95 counties and 38 independent cities. The Commonwealth's population exceeded 8 million in 2010, with the majority of residents living in the eastern portion of the state. The population continues to increase annually in most areas of the state. According to data collected by the U. S. Census Bureau in the *2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*, approximately 51% of the Commonwealth's population may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident. Individuals in need of additional assistance during response or recovery from a disaster (hereafter referred to as access and functional needs) may include, but is not limited to, those who have disabilities, live in institutionalized settings, are elderly, children, have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking, or transportation disadvantaged. An individual with a disability is defined by the *Americans with Disabilities Act* as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such impairment.

This plan was developed with the following assumptions:

1. State agencies assigned responsibilities in the COVEOP have developed and will maintain the necessary plans, standard operating procedures, mutual aid agreements, and model contracts to successfully accomplish their tasks.
2. State agencies are prepared to fulfill responsibilities assigned to them in the COVEOP, supporting plans, and joint operational or regional plans.
3. State agencies' capabilities to carry out response and recovery tasks are enhanced through the development, maintenance, and testing of agency continuity plans.
4. Coordinating NGOs and PSPs have internal plans or procedures specific to their assigned roles and responsibilities outlined in the COVEOP.
5. Incidents, including large scale emergencies or events, require full coordination of operations and resources, and may:
  - Occur at any time with little or no warning.

- Require significant information sharing across multiple jurisdictions and between the public and private sectors.
  - Involve single or multiple jurisdictions and/or geographic areas.
  - Have significant statewide and/or national impact and/or require significant inter-governmental coordination.
  - Involve multiple, highly varied hazards or threats on a local, regional, statewide or national scale.
  - Result in mass casualties; displaced persons; property loss; environmental damage; and disruption of the economy and normal life support systems, essential public services, and basic infrastructure. These effects may be minimized by the proactive notification and deployment of state resources in anticipation of or in response to major incidents in coordination and collaboration with local, private and federal entities.
  - Require resources to assist individuals with access and functional needs.
  - Impact critical infrastructures across sectors.
  - Exceed the capabilities of state agencies, local governments, NGOs, and PSPs (to include private sector infrastructure owners and operators).
  - Attract a sizeable influx of public, private, and voluntary resources, including independent and spontaneous volunteers.
  - Require short-notice state asset coordination and response.
  - Require prolonged, sustained incident management operations and support activities for long-term community recovery and mitigation.
6. The factors influencing the need for federal involvement in response and recovery may include, but are not limited to:
- Severity and magnitude of the incident.
  - State or local needs exceeding available resources. Incident type or location. The need to protect the public health, welfare, or the environment.
  - The economic ability of the state and/or the affected localities to recover from the incident.
7. The combined expertise and capabilities of government at all levels, PSPs, and NGOs will be required to prepare for, respond to, mitigate, and recover from incidents of major or catastrophic proportions.
8. Localities have a plan as part of an emergency management program that reflects current doctrine and protocol, and includes provisions for the needs and requirements of the population, such as children, individuals with disabilities or access and functional needs, service animals, and household pets.

9. The negative effects on Virginia's residents and its economy from natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, winter storms, earthquakes, and wildfires may increase due to increased urban development in vulnerable areas, industrial expansion, traffic congestion and widespread use and transport of hazardous materials. These factors may also increase the risk of human-caused emergencies such as hazardous materials accidents, gas pipeline accidents, power failures, resource shortages and environmental contamination. In addition, the Commonwealth's proximity to Washington, D.C. and federal facilities located throughout Virginia increase the potential for terrorism related incidents.

#### **D. Policies**

1. The *Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws* require the state, and each city, county, and certain towns to establish an emergency management organization, and develop and maintain a current EOP structured around the existing constitutional government.
2. Incidents are typically managed at the lowest possible geographic, organizational, and jurisdictional level. As such, direction of emergency operations will be exercised by the level of affected local government closest to the incident. If an incident is determined to have a terrorism nexus, appropriate federal agencies will likely assume direction and control of the investigation, in coordination with state and local authorities.
3. Coordination of emergency response will be accomplished within the Incident Command System, allowing for the incorporation of local, state, and federal agencies, and other responsible parties.
4. In Virginia, all counties and independent cities, and the towns of Chincoteague, Christiansburg, Farmville, South Boston, and Vinton have the primary responsibility for emergency operations and will commit all available resources to save lives, minimize property damage, and protect the environment. Should local emergency response capabilities be exceeded, outside assistance is available through mutual aid agreements, members of the Commonwealth's SMA Program, or from the state through a request for assistance submitted to the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC).
5. The provision of state assistance and the deployment of resources for emergency response are dependent upon the receipt of prompt and accurate situational information from local officials. Local requests for assistance and/or situation reports will be submitted utilizing WebEOC. If WebEOC is unavailable, information may be transmitted via other means, such as fax, email, telephone, or radio.
6. The Governor may issue an Executive Order declaring that a "state of emergency" exists in all or a portion of the Commonwealth.
7. All Executive Branch agencies (including state institutions of higher education) are resources of the Governor, and therefore may be activated to support the VERT during response or recovery activities.
8. Requests for assistance from entities including, but not necessarily limited to, nursing homes, colleges and universities, and authorities will be submitted to the local Emergency Management Coordinator in the jurisdiction in which the entity resides. Requests for assistance will be submitted to the VEOC by the local Emergency Management Coordinator or their designee when local capabilities are exceeded.

9. Emergency response and recovery activities will be initiated and conducted using the principles contained in NIMS.
10. Assistance from state agencies will be coordinated by the VERT through the VEOC. The VEOC is the primary location from which state coordination is executed.
11. Resources furnished to local governments from state agencies, NGOs, and PSPs will be assigned on a mission-type basis to the appropriate ESF and will be under the operational control of the agency, or organization furnishing the resources. These resources will be furnished as soon as reasonably possible.
12. The Commonwealth may participate in interstate cooperation that includes requesting response and recovery resources from other states and sending resources to other states in accordance with EMAC. The *Code of Virginia* § 44-146.28:1 authorizes reimbursement for services the Commonwealth requests from other states and payment for services sent to other states through EMAC.
13. If the need for resources exceeds the capabilities of localities and the state, the Governor may request federal assistance. The Governor may request the President declare an emergency or major disaster, and may request assistance for individuals, public entities, state agencies, and local governments.
14. During incidents for which the President has declared an emergency or major disaster, federal support is delivered in accordance with relevant provisions of the *Robert T. Stafford Act*, as well as other available disaster assistance programs in coordination with the appropriate agencies of the Commonwealth. This support is requested and coordinated through the VERT.

## II. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Preparedness, response, recovery, prevention, and mitigation strategies are largely based on analyses of natural and human-caused hazards with a history of or potential for impacts in Virginia. The *Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan* identifies and assesses risk to both natural and human-caused hazards. The hazards are categorized based on their characteristics: natural, technological, hazardous materials, and human-caused. In addition, a threat hazard identification and risk assessment (THIRA) has been completed for the Commonwealth, which addresses capability gaps for specific high consequence hazards. The COVEOP is designed to address all hazards identified in the THIRA.

## III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The *Code of Virginia* § 44-146.18 provides that emergency management organizations and operations will be structured around existing constitutional government. The Governor is the Director of Emergency Management for the Commonwealth. The Governor appoints a Coordinator of Emergency Management (State Coordinator). The State Coordinator appoints the VERT Coordinator, who manages the VERT and coordinates response activities. The State Coordinator also appoints the Director of Recovery and Mitigation, who coordinates state recovery activities for a disaster that is declared by the President as authorized by the *Stafford Act*. For a presidentially declared disaster, the State Coordinator is usually designated the State Coordinating Officer by the Governor.

State agencies, and coordinating NGOs and PSPs assigned lead and support emergency response or recovery responsibilities are collectively known as the VERT. The mission of the VERT is to provide leadership in an effort to protect Virginia from the impact of emergencies and disasters, including the

planning and coordination of state, local, and federal entities to accomplish productive and timely recovery efforts. All VERT agencies, NGOs, and PSPs will coordinate with VDEM to develop and maintain their designated part(s) of the COVEOP.

The organization for state level emergency operations includes:

- The Governor and his immediate staff.
- State resources coordinated by VDEM during routine operations and by VERT agencies during augmentations. Prior to a declaration, the Governor (with or without the recommendation of the State Coordinator), may issue a deployment authorization of Virginia National Guard and/or Virginia Defense Force personnel. The State Coordinator will be notified of authorization approvals, including any limitations other than those specified in code, either directly from the Governor or through the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security.
- State agencies assigned emergency responsibilities in the COVEOP. This plan identifies ESFs and designates responsibilities to lead and support agencies for each function.
- Coordinating NGOs designated in the COVEOP and/or affiliated with ESFs. Some NGOs enter into agreements with the Commonwealth of Virginia to perform specific disaster functions.
- PSPs designated in the COVEOP and/or working with the lead state agency for each ESF. Additional PSPs may be incorporated into the VERT as deemed necessary by the VERT Coordinator.
- Recovery activities coordinated by VDEM for the short and interim phases and by the Economic Crisis Strike Force (ECSF) for interim and long-term phases. The ECSF is established in *Code of Virginia* 2.2-205.1 to respond as needed to economic disasters in Virginia communities by assisting localities in developing short and long-term strategies to address the crisis and provide a single point of contact for citizens in affected communities. This Strike Force is led by the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, in coordination with other Secretariats as appropriate.
- Regional coordination: When appropriate, emergency coordination teams are organized within VDEM's seven emergency management regions. State agencies' regional staff and VDEM Local Support Services collaborate in the development of regional coordination plans.
- Local governments: Each city and county, as well as certain towns, are required to have an emergency management organization as defined in the *Code of Virginia* § 44-146.19. Locally available manpower, materials, equipment, and facilities should be identified in each local EOP. Localities not affected may be asked to provide assistance through the SMA Program.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and VDEM coordinate the delivery of disaster assistance from a Joint Field Office (JFO). The state organization for recovery and mitigation parallels the federal organization at the JFO to ensure the effective interface and coordination from both a functional and programmatic perspective. The recovery framework is structured to be flexible and scalable to quickly adapt to any disaster situation.
- Other Federal agencies when requested and within their statutory authority.

### **Additional VERT Organizational Elements**

The Virginia Evacuation Coordination Team for Operational Response (VECTOR) is tasked to provide recommendations to the VERT Coordinator on issues and problems associated with evacuation, sheltering, and re-entry. VECTOR utilizes a team approach to provide efficient and effective information to aid in the decision making process.

VECTOR operates under the direction of the VERT Coordinator and may be convened when conditions require a concerted effort to resolve or coordinate evacuation, sheltering, and reentry. These conditions may include, but are not limited to: recommendations on when, and to what extent, to conduct evacuation and sheltering activities, reviewing options for evacuation traffic flow, emergency fuel support, movement of shelter residents (when required), and if requested, assisting localities with re-entry.

## **IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

This section describes the Commonwealth of Virginia emergency management coordinating structures, processes, and protocols employed for incident management. These coordinating structures and processes are designed to enable execution of the responsibilities of the Governor through the appropriate state agencies. It integrates federal, state, local, NGOs and PSPs efforts into a comprehensive statewide approach to incident management.

The COVEOP and local emergency operations plans are founded upon the concept that emergency operations begin at the jurisdiction level closest to the event, and are managed by local police, fire, emergency medical and health, emergency management, and other response personnel. In the vast majority of disasters, local resources will operate under the umbrella of a mutual aid agreement or compact to provide the first line of emergency response and incident management support. In some instances, a state or federal agency with principal activities or facilities in a local area may act as a first responder and may provide direction or assistance consistent with its specific statutory authorities and responsibilities. State assistance will be provided upon request when needs exceed local capabilities.

Situations in which several localities are threatened or affected concurrently may involve the Commonwealth from the onset. If the Commonwealth's capabilities are exceeded, the Governor may request federal assistance. At each level, the government should officially declare a 'state of emergency' to exist in order to request assistance. A local emergency declaration indicates that local resources capable of handling the situation are fully committed before state assistance is requested. Likewise, state resources should be fully committed before federal assistance is requested. Exceptions are made to these procedures when localities request state assistance with search and rescue or hazardous materials response.

VDEM manages the VEOC from which the Governor, or designee, can direct and control emergency operations statewide. The State Coordinator is the Governor's designee to coordinate the state's response to all emergencies and disasters. Agencies, NGOs, and PSPs assigned VERT lead or supporting responsibilities designate staff to respond to the VEOC.

The VEOC has four operational levels:

- **Routine Operations:** Emergency Operations plans and procedures are developed and maintained. Training and exercises are conducted periodically as required to maintain readiness.

- **Increased Readiness:** When a disaster threatens, all agencies, and coordinating NGOs, and PSPs assigned responsibilities in the COVEOP will take action as called for in their respective parts of the plan.
- **Response Operations:** Full-scale operations and a total commitment of manpower and resources are required to mobilize and respond in time of emergency.
- **Recovery Operations:** Essential facilities and services are restored. Displaced persons return to their homes. Federal disaster assistance programs are implemented. Severely damaged structures are rebuilt, or demolished and replaced. Damaged transportation, water, and communication infrastructure are replaced. Normal conditions and the economy are restored. The duration of this period may extend for two or more years, depending upon the severity of the disaster.

VEOC operational levels are used for all emergencies and are not related to the emergency classification levels for fixed nuclear facilities referenced in the *Radiological Emergency Response Annex* of the COVEOP, or the Readiness Condition Action Guidelines referenced in the *Hurricane and Tropical Storm Response Annex* of the COVEOP.

In time of emergency, the VERT:

- Provides centralized state government emergency operations (at the VEOC) in order to coordinate the delivery of resources to local governments.
- Provides advice and counsel to the Governor or the Governor's designee to formulate policy.
- Establishes priorities.
- Collects, analyzes, and disseminates situational awareness information.
- Provides sufficient staff to maintain communications with the federal, state, local, and private sector partners related to conditions or developing situations related to the emergency.

### **Incident Management Actions**

Incident management begins with identification of a risk, threat, or actual event, and concludes when those affected have been restored to pre-incident conditions, when feasible. Actions may include, but are not limited to, notification and warning, activation of the VERT, response actions, assessment of impact, request for federal assistance, and recovery and mitigation activities.

#### **A. Notification**

State agencies, local governments, NGOs, and PSPs report threats, incidents, and potential incidents using established communications and reporting channels.

The VEOC and the Virginia Fusion Center receive threat and operational information regarding incidents or potential incidents, and then makes an initial determination to implement Federal information sharing and incident management protocols.

## **B. Alert & Warning**

Public notifications shall be disseminated through multiple means that may include:

- Public Announcements
- Social Media
- Watches and Warnings
- Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- Other Emergency Bulletins

## **C. Activation of the VERT**

The VEOC receives notification of conditions, events, and/or occurrences that may affect the Commonwealth, reports of incidents or hazardous conditions existing within the Commonwealth, and requests for assistance from local governments.

In support of the VERT's mission, VDEM maintains an Incident Management Cadre (IMC) to assist the VERT Coordinator in determining the requirement to augment the VERT. The IMC consists of the VERT Coordinator, the Staff Duty Officer, Operations Chief, Plans Section Chief, Logistics Chief, Finance and Administration Chief, Recovery Chief, External Affairs Chief, Search and Rescue Duty Officer, and Communications Maintenance Officer. Subject matter experts may be requested to participate as needed. The VERT Coordinator will, based on information provided from the IMC, brief the State Coordinator and/or his or her designee(s) of the recommended operational course of action.

The VERT Coordinator, in consultation with the State Coordinator, Deputy State Coordinator, and/or his or her designee, will initiate notification of the appropriate VERT Staff and necessary state agency, NGO, and PSP points of contact of an augmentation and request representatives to support the VERT.

Based on an analysis of the information received, the State Coordinator may recommend to the Governor that he/she declare a state of emergency, so that all necessary state resources can be immediately prepared or deployed to affected areas.

## **D. Response Actions**

At the request of local governments, the VERT directs state response activities that address the short-term direct effects of an incident. These activities include immediate actions to preserve life, property, and the environment, meet basic human needs, and maintain the social, economic, and political structure of the affected community.

As part of an effective response, the VERT must continuously refine its ability to assess the situation as an incident unfolds and rapidly provide accurate and accessible information to decision makers. This is accomplished by maintaining situational awareness and a common operating picture through receipt of prompt and accurate information from affected localities using established reporting mechanisms.

Response actions may include the following resources and/or elements:

- Law enforcement
- Fire and emergency medical services
- Evacuation and transportation management
- Emergency public information or other actions taken to minimize additional damage
- Urban search and rescue services
- Deployment of advance teams to assess the severity of impact and expedite the delivery of state resources
- Establishment of mass care facilities, including shelters and feeding operations
- Establishment of a Family Assistance Center
- Provision of public health and medical services, food, water, and other emergency essentials
- Debris clearance and/or the emergency restoration of critical infrastructure
- Control, containment, and removal of environmental contamination

#### **E. Assess Damage and Analyze Impact**

An assessment of the damages and impacts of an incident begins at the local level. Local officials and state agency representatives are required to submit situation reports to the VEOC throughout the course of the incident, and to send an Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) to the VEOC within seventy-two (72) hours after the impact of the event. The time frame may be adjusted by the VERT depending on the type of incident and/or circumstances. It is critical that the information provided in the IDA accurately reflect the damages and impacts sustained by the community, as the decision to request a Preliminary Damage Assessment and seek a Presidential disaster declaration is made based on this information.

As the situation changes and new information becomes available, local officials and state agency representatives will update the VERT as soon as reasonably possible. IDAs should be submitted to the VEOC through WebEOC or on the standard forms provided by VDEM. VERT staff summarizes damage assessments from all sources and evaluates the impact of the incident on localities and the state. These assessments are used by the VERT to determine if state resources are sufficient to manage the incident.

Depending on the findings from the Initial Damage Assessment submitted by localities and state agencies, the State Coordinator may request FEMA conduct a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) in coordination with affected localities or state agencies, to verify the damages and estimate the amount of supplemental assistance needed. ESF #14 will work with FEMA and other ESFs as appropriate, to coordinate joint PDAs. Joint PDAs focus on the more significantly affected areas identified on the Initial Damage Assessments submitted that may be eligible for federal assistance under the Robert T. *Stafford Act*, as amended (e.g., Individual Assistance, Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation), or the Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loan Program. State and federal personnel knowledgeable in these programs will accompany local or state officials to the damaged sites.

## **F. Request for Federal Assistance Under the Stafford Act**

The State Coordinator will report the findings of the PDAs to the Governor and make a recommendation regarding a request federal assistance. Based on findings, the Governor will then send a letter to the President requesting a declaration of emergency or major disaster for specific localities in the Commonwealth for Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Assistance, or all three.

When a large-scale disaster is imminent, it might be obvious that the scope of the event justifies federal assistance. For an expedited declaration, the Governor relies on forecasted or visual impact rather than damages verified through the PDA process.

When a Governor's request for a federal declaration is approved, the declaration will specify the federal assistance programs that will be made available to the state, as well as the jurisdictions included in the action. A Public Assistance Disaster Declaration provides the basis for financial and other forms of aid to state and local governments, and non-profit organizations for debris removal, implementation of protective measures, and damages sustained to critical infrastructure. An Individual Assistance Disaster Declaration provides the basis for financial and other forms of aid to private citizens and, to a more limited extent, to businesses. When a disaster event does not meet the criteria for a *Stafford Act* Individual Assistance Disaster Declaration, it may meet the criteria for a Small Business Disaster Declaration. If requested and approved, hazard mitigation assistance may be available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. This program is based on 15% of the total federal assistance received through the Individual Assistance and/or Public Assistance programs. The Governor can request a SBA declaration if the findings of the SBA damage assessment process fulfills the criteria for a declaration. Other federal disaster assistance declarations can be requested independently including the U.S. Department of Agriculture and DHS/FEMA Fire Management Assistance.

## **G. Recovery Actions**

Recovery involves actions needed to assist individuals and communities in returning to pre-incident conditions when feasible, as well as mitigating the potential impacts of future events. The Commonwealth joins with federal agencies to establish a JFO that serves as the central coordination point among federal, state, local and voluntary organizations for delivering recovery assistance programs. ESF #14 and the ECSF will be the organizational framework used to plan, implement, and coordinate the incident specific short, interim, and long-term components of recovery. The ECSF will focus primarily on the long-term phase and be organized in the context of the Recovery Support Functions described in NDRF.

Recovery actions typically include direct financial assistance to eligible individuals who have lost residential dwellings or personal property, the coordination and execution of service and site restoration plans, and the reconstitution of state and local government operations and services through private sector, non-governmental, and public assistance programs. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is a component of the Public Assistance Program, and is also implemented statewide, based on a strategy designed to mitigate future damage throughout the Commonwealth.

### *Short-Term Recovery*

The short-term component of the recovery process supports a variety of activities, including reviewing and assessing IDA's, recommending, arranging, and supporting PDAs, developing the request for a federal declaration, and if the declaration request is approved, establishing a JFO with FEMA. The JFO focuses primarily on the delivery of disaster assistance programs authorized by *The Stafford Act*, the management of the cost reimbursement process, and the coordination of available resources and support from local, state, federal, and non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector.

### *Long-Term Recovery*

The long-term recovery component of ESF #14 will assess the severity of impacts on the community, and begin defining the anticipated long-term recovery needs and resource requirements. The assessment associated with the long-term phase is broader in scope and focuses on the social and economic impact to the community and associated infrastructure.

Factors that are considered in this process include:

- Impacts on the housing sector and the projected number of displaced persons on a long-term basis.
- The severity and scope of the infrastructure damage precipitating major service and economic disruptions, and impacting negatively on overall response and recovery operations.
- Impacts on key sectors of the communities' economic base.

Based on the initial assessment of long-term recovery needs and resource requirements, and following consultation with the appropriate state officials and support agencies, the ESF #14 long-term recovery team will make a recommendation with regard to activating the ECSF. The ECSF will begin developing the necessary plans, priorities, initiatives and assistance to address the long-term recovery issues identified. The long-term recovery liaison team will continue to interface and coordinate with the short-term recovery component until the housing and associated issues of the shelter population have been addressed. The ECSF will support and be represented in the JFO as required and continue to support long-term recovery processes until objectives have been fulfilled.

### *State Public Assistance Program – Emergency Relief to Localities*

For incidents that do not meet the level of impact to result in a federal declaration, state recovery programs may be implemented with or without a field office near the disaster site. The *Code of Virginia* § 44-146.28 established a state public assistance program entitled Emergency Relief to Localities to assist local governments in the recovery of eligible costs associated with localized major emergencies or disasters that lack sufficient damages to warrant a Presidential Declaration. The program, which is administered by VDEM, is structured like the federal Public Assistance Program in terms of categories of work and having a threshold requirement. The program is considered one of last resort for those local jurisdictions that cannot meet the full cost. Any assistance provided under the program is at the discretion of the Governor.

### *Virginia Disaster Relief Fund (VDRF)*

The VDRF is a financial resource of last resort to help Virginians with housing recovery through the assistance of members of the Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and other non-profit and faith-based organizations. VDRF grants are awarded to 501(c)3 organizations and not given directly to individual households. VDEM accepts all grant applications and they are reviewed by an advisory committee who makes recommendations to the State Coordinator. The State Coordinator makes the final approval for fund disbursement.

## H. Mitigation Actions

VDEM maintains the *Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan* separate from the COVEOP due to the federally mandated content and a separate review schedule. The goal of this plan is to reduce the impacts of hazards on human, economic, critical infrastructure, and natural resources throughout the state by incorporating mitigation concepts and objectives into existing and future policies, plans, regulations, and laws in the Commonwealth, improving the quality of the data and analysis used in the hazard identification and risk assessment process, identifying and implementing projects that will eliminate long-term risk, directly reduce impacts from hazards, and maintain continuity of operations, and promoting awareness of hazards and potential mitigation strategies in order to increase resiliency.

Hazard mitigation involves reducing or eliminating long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their impacts. The JFO is the central coordination point among federal, state, local agencies, and NGOs for beginning the process that leads to the delivery of post disaster hazard mitigation assistance.

Mitigation measures may be implemented prior to, during, or after an incident, and in accordance with stated objectives and strategies in the *Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan*.

The joint federal-state mitigation unit in the JFO coordinates the delivery of mitigation programs within the affected area, including:

- Grant programs for loss reduction measures (if available).
- Delivery of loss reduction building-science expertise.
- Coordination of federal flood insurance operations and integration of mitigation with other program efforts.
- Conducting hazard recovery mapping to permit expedited and accurate implementation of both recovery and mitigation programs.
- Predictive modeling to protect critical assets.
- Early documentation of losses avoided due to previous hazard mitigation measures.
- Community education and outreach necessary to foster loss reduction.
- Education materials to affected property owners.

## V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. State Government

#### *Governor of Virginia*

As the chief executive officer of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Governor is responsible for the public safety and welfare of the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The powers and duties of the Governor in emergency management are summarized below. Complete language can be found in *Code of Virginia* §44-146.17.

## The Governor:

- Is responsible for implementing the COVEOP and coordinating state resources to address the full spectrum of actions to respond to and recover from incidents in an all-hazards context to include terrorism, natural disasters, accidents, and other contingencies.
- If appropriate, makes a verbal declaration of a “state of emergency”, to include an authorization to grant or seek temporary overweight, over width, registration, license, or hours worked exemptions to carriers transporting emergency relief supplies or providing utility restoration services. These verbal orders will be followed by a written authorization and an executive order.
- If appropriate, amends and rescinds orders and regulations and/or directs and compels evacuation of all or part of the populace from any threatened or affected area.
- Ensures the provision of essential services, including emergency and disaster response and recovery activities by executive branch agencies and institutions of higher education.
- 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 any jurisdiction of the Commonwealth.
- Encourages participation in mutual aid and implements authorities for the state to enter into mutual aid agreements with other states to facilitate resource sharing.
- May request federal assistance when it becomes clear that the capabilities of the Commonwealth will be insufficient or have been exceeded or exhausted.
- May expend “sum sufficient” monies.
- May, without an Emergency Declaration, authorize the deployment of up to 300 members of the Virginia National Guard or Virginia Defense Force and materials (pursuant to *Code of Virginia* § 44-75.1 and § 44-146.28) to assist in times of emergency. Deployments under this code section are limited to a maximum of 300 personnel not to exceed five days, unless a state of emergency is declared.
- May provide financial assistance to localities.
- Serves as the Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth military forces pursuant to the *Code of Virginia* § 44-8.

*State Coordinator and VDEM*

The State Coordinator of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management serves as the State Emergency Planning Director and has the following powers and duties as summarized below. Complete language can be found in *Code of Virginia* § 44-146.18 and 44-146.18:2.

## The State Coordinator and VDEM:

- Implements portions of the COVEOP to provide timely assistance to localities for non-declared incidents or events.

- Coordinates and provides guidance and assistance to affected political subdivisions to ensure orderly and timely response to and recovery from disaster effects.
- Coordinates disaster response actions of federal, state, and volunteer relief agencies.
- Establishes and maintains liaison with affected political subdivisions.
- In an emergency which does not warrant a gubernatorial declaration of a state of emergency, may after consultation with and approval of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, enter into contracts and incur obligations necessary to prevent or alleviate damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused by such emergency and to protect the health and safety of persons or property.
- Determines requirements for disaster relief and recovery assistance.
- Is responsible for ensuring that state response and recovery actions consider the resources needed for individuals with disabilities and/or access and functional needs.

#### *Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)*

The VERT consists of representatives from state agencies, NGOs, and PSPs who may be supported by federal partners. During a disaster, VERT personnel ensure that needed resources are provided to disaster stricken areas.

All VERT agencies and organizations have the responsibility to:

- Maintain situational awareness through the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information and intelligence data.
- Receive, track, and coordinate requests for resources.
- Ensure all incident-applicable ESFs are staffed.
- Implement plans to coordinate emergency management efforts among local, state, and federal entities; as well as NGOs and PSPs.
- Facilitate resolution of legal, policy, political, social, and economic concerns of the affected jurisdiction(s) as they affect response and recovery operations.
- Facilitate formulation of Protective Action Decisions, as needed.
- Facilitate demobilization plans and procedures.
- Participate in the after action report process.

#### *State Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education*

It is the responsibility of state government to provide for the well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth and ensure the continuity of state government operations, including the delivery of essential state government services during a disaster as tasked in this plan. Therefore, state agencies and institutions of higher education must continue to be prepared for all disasters

All state agencies and institutions of higher education have the responsibility to:

- Have plans or procedures to implement their specific responsibilities outlined in the COVEOP.
- Have documented emergency action and continuity plans for their response to and recovery from a natural or human-caused disaster.
- Direct agency area supervisors (from applicable division, district, or local offices) to participate in the local emergency planning process and become a part of the local emergency response organization, as appropriate.
- During small localized events, when possible, provide assistance directly to political subdivisions.

## **B. Local Government**

The *Code of Virginia* § 44-146.19 designates powers and duties for emergency management to political subdivisions (summarized below). Each jurisdiction:

- Shall have a director of emergency management May request assistance from the state when local resources and capabilities are overwhelmed.
- The local Emergency Management Director in the political subdivision within the disaster area may, under the supervision and control of the Governor or his designated representative:
  - Control, restrict, allocate or regulate the use, sale, production, and distribution of food, fuel, clothing, and other commodities, materials, goods, services and resource systems which fall within the boundaries of that jurisdiction and which do not impact systems affecting adjoining or other political subdivisions.
  - Enter into contracts and incur obligations necessary to combat threatened or actual disaster, protect the health and safety of person and property, and provide emergency assistance to the victims of such disaster.
  - Proceed without regard to time-consuming procedures and formalities prescribed by law (except mandatory constitutional requirements) pertaining to the performance of public work, entering into contracts, incurring of obligations, employment of temporary works, rental of equipment, purchase of supplies and materials, levying of taxes, and appropriation and expenditure of public funds.

In addition, the local jurisdiction:

- Shall identify a primary party responsible for managing emergencies within their jurisdiction.
- Is responsible for coordinating local resources to address the full spectrum of actions to respond to, and recover from incidents involving all hazards including terrorism, natural disasters, accidents, and other contingencies.
- Is responsible for ensuring that local actions include and accommodate individuals with disabilities and/or access and functional needs.
- May develop, or cause to be developed, mutual aid agreements for reciprocal assistance in the case of a disaster too great to be dealt with unassisted. Such arrangements shall be consistent with state

plans and programs and it shall be the duty of each local organization for emergency management to render assistance in accordance with the provisions of such mutual aid agreements.

- Will receive and fulfill requests for assistance from entities including, but not necessarily limited to, nursing homes, colleges, universities, and authorities within their jurisdiction until local capabilities have been exceeded or exhausted.
- Will coordinate with state and federal officials after a disaster to implement recovery and mitigation strategies and programs.
- May form strong partnerships with citizen groups and organizations who provide support for incident management response, recovery, and mitigation. Local citizen groups, such as Community Emergency Response Teams and Medical Reserve Corps may coordinate with local and state agencies to provide resources to augment response and recovery activities.

#### **C. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

NGOs (including voluntary organizations) may:

- If appropriate, provide specific disaster relief services during response and recovery in cooperation with state or local officials. This includes collaborating with first responders, governments at all levels, and other agencies and organizations providing relief services to sustain life, reduce physical and emotional distress, and promote recovery of disaster victims.

#### **D. Private Sector Partners (PSPs)**

Private sector organizations are critical to the capabilities of the VERT. They may:

- If appropriate, provide specific disaster relief services during response and recovery in cooperation with state or local officials.
- Support the VERT by participating in the planning process, sharing information, identifying risks, performing vulnerability assessments, developing emergency response and business continuity plans, enhancing their overall readiness, implementing appropriate prevention and protection programs, and donating or otherwise providing goods and services through contractual arrangement or government purchases to assist in response to and recovery from an incident.

The table below summarizes the roles of private sector organizations.

Organization	Role
Affected Organization or Infrastructure	Private-sector organizations may be affected by direct or indirect consequences of the incident. These include privately owned critical infrastructure, key resources, and other private sector entities that are significant to local, regional, and national economic recovery from the incident. Examples of privately owned infrastructure include transportation, telecommunications, private utilities, financial institutions, and hospitals. Critical infrastructure and key resources are grouped into 18 sectors that together provide essential functions and services supporting various aspects of the Virginia government, economy, and society. <i>Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7</i> establishes a national policy for Federal departments and agencies to identify and prioritize critical infrastructure and to protect them from terrorist attacks. The directive defines relevant terms and delivers 31 policy statements. These policy statements define what the directive covers and the roles various federal, state, and local agencies will play in carrying it out.
Response Resource	Private-sector entities provide response resources (donated or compensated) during an incident, including specialized teams, essential services, equipment, and advanced technologies through local public-private emergency plans or mutual aid and assistance agreements, or in response to requests from government and non-governmental volunteer initiatives.
Regulated and/or Responsible Party	Owners/operators of certain regulated facilities or hazardous operations may be legally responsible for preparing for and preventing incidents from occurring and responding to an incident once it occurs. For example, Federal regulations require owners/operators of nuclear power plants to maintain emergency plans and facilities, and to perform assessments, prompt notifications, and training for response to an incident.
State/Local Emergency Organization Member	Private-sector organizations may serve as an active partner in local and state emergency preparedness and response organizations, planning, and activities.
Components of the State Economy	As the key element of the state economy, private-sector resilience and continuity of operations planning, as well as recovery and restoration from an actual incident, represent essential emergency management activities.

## VI. PLAN MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

### A. Coordination

The Commonwealth of Virginia uses the “preparedness organization” concept described in the NIMS for preparedness and maintenance of the COVEOP. The organization includes all agencies, NGOs and PSPs with a role in state level incident management and provides a forum for coordination of planning, training, equipping, and other preparedness requirements.

The following entities are critical to the Commonwealth’s preparedness efforts to include the development and maintenance of this plan:

- The Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security (SPSHS)

Per *Code of Virginia* § 2.2-221, the Secretary to which VDEM reports. SPSHS works with federal, state, and local officials, as well as the private sector, to develop a seamless, coordinated security and preparedness strategy for implementation of this plan and appropriate state-level response efforts.

- Secure Commonwealth Panel

Appointed by the governor and assigned the responsibility to “monitor and assess the implementation of statewide prevention, preparedness, response and recovery initiatives....”

- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

*Code of Virginia* § 44-146.18 assigns the Department of Emergency Management the responsibility to:

- Prepare and maintain the State Emergency Operations Plan for disaster response and recovery operations that assigns primary and support responsibilities for basic emergency services functions to state agencies, organizations, and personnel as appropriate.
- Coordinate and administer the disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery plans and programs with the proponent federal, state, and local government agencies and related groups.

## **B. COVEOP Maintenance**

VDEM is responsible for maintaining the COVEOP. The COVEOP is continually reviewed and periodically updated as required to incorporate federal policy changes, gubernatorial directives, legislative changes, and operational changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events. The COVEOP will be reviewed and adopted in its entirety by the Governor at least every four years. This section outlines protocols for interim changes and full updates of the COVEOP. A COVEOP Management Standard Operating Procedure has been adopted to further define these protocols. Changes include additions of new or supplementary material and deletions. No proposed change should contradict or override authorities or other plans.

Any agency or coordinating NGO or PSP may propose and develop a change to the COVEOP. VDEM is responsible for coordinating review of the proposed change among the lead and support agencies, NGOs, and PSPs of each affected ESF and any associated agency program areas as required. If VDEM identifies planning needs that require immediate resolution, or at the request of a state agency, VDEM may convene a COVEOP Plan Committee and revise areas of the plan identified by the committee. Interim changes to the COVEOP that are administrative in nature may be approved by the State Coordinator, however major revisions or full updates will be sent to the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security for review and concurrence prior to submitting the plan to the Governor for approval. After receiving approval by the Governor, full updates will be promulgated by Executive Order.

The VDEM procedure for changes includes:

- Obtaining the official approval for the change from the appropriate officials of the affected agencies, NGOs, and PSPs.

- A process to notify and receive approval from the Governor or his/her designee for all requested changes.
- Ensure appropriate notification is made about the changes and maintain a record of changes.

### **C. Standards for other Commonwealth Emergency Plans**

The COVEOP, including all annexes, is the core plan for emergency operations, and provides the structures and processes for coordinating incident management activities for human-caused disasters, natural disasters, and other emergencies or events. Following the guidance provided by the NRF, NIMS, and other related documents, the COVEOP incorporates and/or provides an umbrella configuration for state emergency and incident management plans (with appropriate modifications and revisions) as integrated components of the COVEOP, as supplements, or as supporting operational plans.

Accordingly, state agencies must incorporate key COVEOP concepts and operational elements when developing or updating agency specific incident management and response plans. All additional response and recovery plans or procedures developed by agencies should be compatible with the COVEOP. Agencies are responsible for providing VDEM with current agency plans or procedures that support their role in the COVEOP.

### **D. Plan Testing, Training, and Exercises**

Responsible state agencies, and coordinating NGOs and PSPs, will conduct training to ensure the COVEOP can be effectively implemented in a timely manner.

VDEM, in coordination with the VERT, will conduct an annual exercise or a series of exercises of the COVEOP. As required by the *Code of Virginia* §44-146.17:2, one exercise must address, among other issues, a prolonged and widespread loss of electric power. Exercises may include multiple agencies, jurisdictions, NGOs, and PSPs. In addition, the VERT will participate with FEMA and Virginia Dominion Virginia Power in an annual exercise of the Radiological Response Annex. Any deficiencies, findings, areas recommended for corrective action, or improvement arising from these exercises, or any other exercises coordinated from the VEOC, will be considered and corrected by appropriate training, plan update, and/or demonstration in any subsequent exercise or postulated event. VDEM has developed and instituted an after action review (AAR) process in which all VERT agencies participate. Local government, NGO, and PSP representatives are encouraged to participate in the AAR process.

### **E. Plan Implementation**

This plan is effective for execution upon and pursuant to the Executive Order promulgating the same. The State Coordinator will ensure that this document is subject to a minimum of an annual maintenance, review, and update based on selective evaluations, AARs, and new guidance.

## VII. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

Note that authorities and references for the entire plan are located in Appendix C

### *Authorities*

- *Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws*

### *References*

- *The Stafford Act*
- National Incident Management System
- *National Response Framework*
- *National Disaster Recovery Framework*
- EMAP Standards (2013):
  - 3.1.2
  - 4.6.1
  - 4.6.2
  - 4.6.3
  - 4.10.1
  - 4.10.5
  - 4.14.3