# INSTRUCTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

**GENERAL SUBJECT:**
Emergency Response

**NUMBER:**
IIM-OD-14-03

**SPECIFIC SUBJECT:**
Emergency and Incident Response, Command and Control Structure and Standard Operating Procedures.

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**OPERATIONS DIVISION APPROVAL:**
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**DIRECTED TO:**

- District Administrators
- Central Office Division Administrators
- District Maintenance Engineers
- Regional Operations Directors
- Residency Administrators and Engineers
Emergency Response SOP

**Background: The Command and Control Approach**

To be more efficient as an agency in emergency response, VDOT’s Command and Control structure ensures that there is someone in a position of authority to make decisions 24/7. Command and Control dictates:

- The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission.
- An arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission.

VDOT has identified several event types, each of which requires specific emergency response processes, resources, and strategies. These event types are:

- Incidents
- Weather events
- Hazardous Material Incidents
- Terrorism/Security Incidents

**Purpose: Emergency Response SOP**

This document defines VDOT’s Emergency Response Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), which will:

- Enable continuous, 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, monitoring of daily situations
- Provide a maximum of three levels of decision making to respond to any incident or event
- Allow pre-event mobilization to properly carry out predetermined action plans when possible
- Allow seamless activation of the Situation Room in accordance with NIMS ICS guidelines
- Adjust Situation Room structure to meet incident or event specifics
- Promote communication of the incident/event Common Operating Picture (COP) to appropriate levels of the department
- Facilitate the safe, quick restoration of the transportation system to normal conditions that:
  - Are safe
  - Enable the easy movement of people and goods
  - Enhance the economy
  - Improve the quality of life of the traveling public
Document Map

The ER SOP contains the primary definitions, roles, and responsibilities of VDOT’s approach to emergency and incident response, including the four event categories, Incidents, HAZMAT, Terrorist, and Weather. Specific steps and details of how to respond to each incident category are contained in a separate process document for each incident. Figure 1 shows the relationship of the ER SOP to the specific event process documents.

Figure 1: VDOT’s Emergency Response Document Map

Responsibilities: Command and Control

The VDOT District Offices, Transportation Operations Support Center (OSC), Transportation Operations Centers (TOC), Residencies, and Area Headquarters, and Turnkey Asset Maintenance Services Contractors (TAMS) will use this protocol to define the following:

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1. **Three Levels of Decision-Making**

Each District will ensure a maximum of 3 Levels of Decision-Making. Efficient and timely decision-making are critical in Emergency Response for all incident types. Incident response levels have been developed to serve as the appropriate information filter and to ensure each decision maker is informed about an event.

1.1. **Incident Response Levels**

1.1.1. Incident Level I Response: Requires, at a minimum, traffic control or ordinary maintenance actions by the Department.

1.1.2. Incident Level II Response: Incidents that require internal and/or external department coordination, restorative maintenance decisions, significant funding authorizations, or impacts traffic beyond normal day-to-day expectations.

1.1.3. Incident Level III Response: Incidents that have a major impact to the District/Region, require a Department ICS structure, scope of project extends beyond Residency boundaries, requires decisions and funding authorizations beyond the scope of the Resident Engineer or Administrator.

1.2. **Command Levels**

1.2.1. **Level I** – The on-scene VDOT Field Commander will provide the highest level decisions on-scene, unless relieved by the Level II Commander. This decision-maker must work in cooperation with other responders under a unified command structure.

1.2.2. **Level II** – Level II Commander at a Residency or TAMS Contract Administrator/Monitor group will provide the highest level decisions within a residency or section of the transportation system.

1.2.3. **Level III** – The District Duty Officer will provide the highest level decisions within a District: i.e., for a district-level incident or event, the DO assumes the role of Incident Commander.

It will be up to each District, Residency and TAMS Contractor to assign personnel to these command levels. While this memorandum focuses on the Duty Officer, the same principles apply to a VDOT Field Commander.
2. Administrative Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. Chief Engineer

2.1.1. Acts on behalf of the Commissioner to administer VDOT’s statewide Emergency Response Program.

2.1.2. May delegate staff to:

2.1.2.1. Oversee CO DO rotational schedule

2.1.2.2. Make all necessary administrative decisions associated with maintaining an emergency response program, including set and maintain Emergency Response policies and standards

2.2. State Operations Engineer, or delegate

2.2.1. Acts in cooperation with the State Maintenance Engineer

2.2.2. Ensures appropriate statewide information is available and accurate, including:

- Current SOP’s and processes
- Applicable resource materials

2.2.3. Identifies a minimum of eight (8) individuals to fulfill functions of Central Office Duty Officer (CO DO) through rotational schedule. CO DO’s will be selected from current Department employees and trained to fill a rotational schedule, provided they have the appropriate experience and skills required for the assignment, as described in section 3.1 Duty Officer Baseline Qualifications.

2.2.4. Ensures those assigned to CO DO rotation have skills required and assists with training and development of those candidates

2.2.5. Ensures CO DO assignments remain a priority over normal work assignments.

2.2.6. Ensures support from other staff identified to potentially fill ICS structure positions, and that they have the appropriate training.

2.2.7. Ensures that the CO DO’s rotational schedule is always adequately staffed.

- Makes assignments and distribute rotational schedule.
- CO DO’s will be notified of their place in the rotational schedule in advance.
- At the SME’s discretion, the SME may assume or reassign CO DO responsibilities and allow the currently assigned Duty Officer to resume their normal duties.

2.3. District Administrator (DA)

2.3.1. Is responsible for the district’s emergency response program.

2.3.2. May delegate the District Maintenance Engineer to oversee the DO rotational schedule with the authority to make all necessary administrative decisions associated with delivering the district’s emergency response program.

2.4. District Maintenance Engineer (DME)

2.4.1. Acts in cooperation with other districts and the CO to deliver and execute the emergency response program

2.4.2. Ensures appropriate district information is available and accurate
2.4.3. Identifies a minimum of eight (8) individuals to fulfill functions of Duty Officer (DO) through rotational schedule. DO’s will be selected from current Department employees and trained to fill a rotational schedule, provided they have the appropriate experience and skills required for the assignment, described in section 3.1 Duty Officer Baseline Qualifications.

2.4.4. Ensures those assigned to DO rotation have skills required and assist with training and development of those candidates.

2.4.5. Ensures DO assignments remain a priority over normal work assignments.

2.4.6. Ensures support from other staff identified to potentially fill ICS structure positions, and that they have the appropriate training.

2.4.7. Ensures that the DO’s rotational schedule is always adequately staffed.
  
  • Makes assignments and distributes rotational schedule.
  
  • DO’s will be notified of their place in the rotational schedule in advance.
  
  • To maintain adequate coverage and consistency across districts, it is recommended the Duty Officer rotation schedule have a minimum of eight personnel. Team rotations will take place Mondays at 10:00am. If individual 12 hour shifts are run, they will do so from 10:00am to 10:00pm and vice versa.

2.4.8. When a major weather event is forecast, and at his/her discretion, the DME (or his designee, if DME out of place) may take over as Duty Officer and establish the ICS structure to suit the needs of the event.
  
  • The ROD and RTOM are still in the duty officer rotation, just as they always were, if so directed by the host DA.
  
  • This releases other duty officers (like ROD, RTOM, and Resident Engineer or Administrator) to return to their normal role in such emergencies. In particular, this allows the ROD and RTOM to participate in their own rotation as on-duty manager in the TOC, and it allows the Residency Engineer / Manager to manage his/her residency.
  
  • RODs, RTOMs, and RE/Ms may then be assigned roles in the ICS structure under the Duty Officer.
3. Operational Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Duty Officer Baseline Qualifications

3.1.1. Pay band 5 managers and above:
- With maintenance and/or operations experience
- Without maintenance and/or operations experience who can be trained in NIMS/ICS: ability to plan, organize, and execute
- Pay band 4 staff who meet the criteria and at the discretion of the DA and DME.

3.1.2. Knowledge of VDOT’s ER SOP, Incident Process, and Weather Process

3.1.3. Management experience

3.1.4. Maintenance and/or operations experience, preferred

3.1.5. NIMS training

3.1.6. Knowledge of district geographical boundaries

3.1.7. Knowledge of location of district and residency offices

3.1.8. Knowledge of District organizational chart

3.1.9. Knowledge of relationship between district and the TOC

3.1.10. Knowledge of each Division’s operational functions within a district

3.1.11. Knowledge of CO structures and functions

3.1.12. General knowledge of how an AHQ can operate as the primary ER task force, including typical size and operational capacity, and where to look up specific info on any given AHQ

3.1.13. General knowledge of work zone policies and requirements, e.g. the Work Area Protection Manual

3.1.14. Knowledge of partner agencies’ functions, roles, and capabilities

3.1.15. Knowledge of VDOT procurement policies and practices, including TAMS

3.2. Central Office Duty Officer

3.2.1. For statewide incidents and events, the primary role of the Central Office Duty Officer is of statewide situational awareness, coordinating Central Office emergency response related activities, and communication with Chief Engineer/Executive Team as appropriate. The Central Office Duty Officer determines the command staff needed to: coordinate resources between Districts, and coordinate Agency response with Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), FEMA and FHWA.

3.2.2. The CO Duty Officer has the responsibility and authority to initiate activation of the CO Command structure.

3.2.3. It is recommended the Central Office Duty Officer rotation schedule have a minimum of eight personnel. To match district Duty Officer shift schedules, one individual will serve for the week beginning on Mondays at 10:00 am.
3.3. Duty Officer

3.3.1. The primary role of the Duty Officer is to be the designated command and decision making point of contact for district incidents and events. The Duty Officer determines the command staff needed to: support field operations, direct district-wide Incident Action Plan activities, and restore travel to its pre-event condition.

3.3.2. The Duty Officer has the responsibility and authority to initiate activation of the District ICS structure and direct response activities.

3.3.3. In the absence of an event meeting the criteria outlined within the Incident Process or the Weather Process, the Duty Officer will maintain situational awareness and perform basic monitoring/reporting roles as a priority task over their normal work assignment.

3.4. Level II Commander

3.4.1. The primary role of the Level II Commander is to be the designated command and decision making point of contact for a residency or section of transportation system. The Level II Commander manages an operation, plans and directs resources, and is responsible for restoring travel to its pre-event condition.

3.4.2. The Level II Commander may be an assigned responsibility, or rotate among area managers. If a rotational schedule is established, it should not conflict with the Duty Officer rotation and any changes should be on Mondays at 10:00 am.

3.4.3. The Level II Commander may report on scene and may assume the role of VDOT Field Commander.

3.5. VDOT Field Incident Commander

3.5.1. The primary role of the VDOT Field Commander is to direct on-scene response, participate in the unified command structure, represent VDOT on-scene and communicate status information to TOC.

3.5.2. An VDOT Field Commander should have prior training and experience related to the specific incident. If the scope and/or complexity of the incident exceed the capabilities of the VDOT Field Commander, they should contact the TOC to notify the on-call Level II Commander for further guidance.

3.6. Transportation Operations Center (TOC)

3.6.1. Operate the transportation system, 24/7, by monitoring the transportation system, verifying road and traffic conditions, dispatching resources (responding) to emergencies and informing the motorists. Operate and maintain all Intelligent transportation System (ITS) tools used to accomplish this objective such as traffic cameras, Safety Service Patrols (SSP), signal operations, and changeable message signs (CMS).

3.6.2. Maintain situational awareness and information flow.

3.6.3. Dispatch/contact appropriate response personnel in accordance with SOP’s.

3.6.4. Notify Duty Officer when event triggers are reached.

3.6.5. Support Duty Officer through gathering and disseminating information, appropriate application of ITS and operational assets, facilitating coordination and communication with other response parties.
3.6.6. Maintain situational awareness regarding the operational status of real-time operational tools, such as ITS devices, traffic signals, lane control systems, etc.

3.6.7. Coordinate event status and requests for resources, as directed by the Duty Officer.

3.6.8. Perform quality assurance/quality control to VA Traffic, traveler information and other event information.

3.6.9. Provide backup VA Traffic data entry as requested.

3.7. **Central Office Operations Division, Field Operations Section**

3.7.1. For statewide events, CO Field Ops. Will coordinate resources and share information.

3.7.2. Support Central Office Duty Officer as needed, which may include representing VDOT at the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and coordinating requests for assistance with adjoining states/District of Columbia.

3.7.3. Coordinate statewide transportation emergency event plans.

3.7.4. Distribute Daily statewide status reports.
4. Day to Day Duty Officer conduct of VDOT Emergency and Incident Response Plans

The following Roles and Responsibilities would be carried out by the Duty Officer upon assuming the watch, during normal day to day operations, until an event is initiated, and until watch is turned over to the next Duty Officer.

4.1. Maintains proactive situational awareness related to the operation of the transportation system as a priority task over their normal work assignment. The Duty Officer is expected to look ahead to anticipate problems that might arise during their watch that may require an emergency response. Some examples:

4.1.1. Monitors weather forecasts, preparations for holiday traffic, preparations for major special events, preparations for major construction activities that might significantly affect traffic, and events in adjoining Cities/Districts/Regions/States.

4.1.2. Perform all normal work assignments, until an event is triggered and they are notified by phone contact.

4.2. When a weather event is forecasted or other event is planned or predicted, finalizes Incident Action Plan and provides advanced warnings or notifications of potential event activation to include mobilization plans and anticipated level.

4.3. Maintains contact with TOC regarding updated situational awareness such as weather forecasts, traffic congestion, incidents and other planned events.

4.4. Conducts shift briefing with on-coming shift Duty Officer, providing information to include:

4.4.1. Current situation and incident action plan status

4.4.2. For ongoing incidents, Incident Action Plan for next Operational Period, including those within adjacent areas or localities

4.4.3. Potential problems and weather forecast for next Operational Period.

4.4.4. Issues needing resolution

4.4.5. Refer to Duty Officer Turnover Checklist