



Unified Command

Unified Command is used for larger incidents usually when multiple agencies are involved. A Unified Command functions as a single entity. Unified Command typically includes a command representative from the involved agencies with one person from that group designated to act as the *group spokesperson*, and not as an Incident Commander. Unified Command is used anytime an incident crosses jurisdictional boundaries or exceeds the responsibility of a single agency. It allows all agencies with responsibility for an incident to establish a common set of incident objectives, strategies, plans, and priorities to jointly execute the incident operations and maximize the use of assigned resources. Most significant incidents in San Francisco will involve unified command with San Francisco Fire and Police fulfilling lead roles. However, any of the above agencies may be involved in Unified Command.

2.7.3 Field Command - Single Site Incidents and Multi-Site Incidents

In **Single Site Incidents**, all MCI field operations are at one location usually under a single ICS command structure. **Multi-Site Incidents** are two or more related or unrelated MCIs regardless of type, occurring simultaneously within a single Operational Area.

The size and configuration of the ICS structure and command for a single site or multi-site incidents depends on various factors such as jurisdictional complexity, size of involved geographic area, span of control, logistical needs and potential for growth. Incident Complexes or Area Command are ICS structures and command for major incidents. An *Incident Complex* is two or more individual incidents located in the same general proximity assigned to a single Incident Commander or Unified Command to facilitate management. These incidents are typically limited in scope and complexity and can be managed by a single entity. *Area Command* is NOT used in the San Francisco Emergency Management structure.

In the ICS structure, EMS MCI field operations are under the responsibility of the Operations Section in the Medical Group. For single-site incidents that are small, only one Operations Section - Medical Group will be established. For larger incidents or multi-site incidents with more than one Operations Section - Medical Group, a Medical Branch with several Medical Groups will be established. The Medical Branch structure maintains the appropriate span of control to manage large patient incidents.

Section 2.8 In-County Coordination

For large or multi-site incidents, higher-level support facilities above the field level may be activated. These facilities provide logistical and administrative support or in some instances, set response priorities and objectives to ensure efficient use of resources. Activated facilities may include the Emergency Operations Center and / or Departmental Operations Centers.



2.8.1 Emergency Operations Center / Departmental Operation Centers

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is a facility space that provides centralized, city-wide coordination of emergency responses. It is staffed with personnel trained in emergency management and is equipped with a variety of systems and tools that aid in data collection and sharing, resource allocation, and other critical functions. The EOC coordinates information with city DOCs (if activated) and other governmental and non-governmental agencies in order to maintain a comprehensive situational analysis. It also serves as San Francisco's Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC), as described in NIMS, thereby ensuring that all response systems are interconnected and complementary rather than duplicative.

The EOC is activated when citywide multi-agency coordination is needed for an MCI event. The EOC provides:

- A central coordination point for multi-agency emergency management of the MCI (e.g., emergency operations, communications, damage assessment, media and public information).
- A single location to collect and disseminate information to create a common operating picture of San Francisco's citywide response activities.
- Facilitate actions necessary to protect residents and property of San Francisco during a citywide event.

Like the EOC, Departmental Operations Centers (DOCs) provide facility space for the centralized coordination of usually one emergency functions (e.g. fire, police, health, etc.). In San Francisco's local government, DOCs also serve as the disaster command centers for each city department or affiliated response agencies (e.g. American Red Cross).

2.8.2 EOC and DOC Support During a MCI

The EOC would rarely be activated during a Level 1 MCI Level since those incidents are usually handled only through a field response.

The EOC will be activated for MCI's requiring multi-city agency responses or out-of-county resources that occurs in MCI Levels 2 – 4. The decision to activate the EOC is done in consultation with the DEM Deputy Director or DEM Duty Officer. The City and County of San Francisco Emergency Response Plan describes in further detail the organization and command of the citywide response to large or complex disaster incidents. The same plan is followed for citywide organization and command of large or complex multi-casualty incidents.

A DOC may be activated when single-agency coordination is needed for a large emergency response. Depending on the nature, size and scope of a MCI, a single DOC or several DOCs may



be activated to support the response. If multiple DOCs are activated, the EOC also activates to provide centralized coordination for the response. DOCs contribute to citywide response efforts through communications and coordination with the EOC. Any of the city departmental DOCs may be involved in supporting a MCI response, especially in a large-scale event that covers several operational periods.

2.8.3 Role of EOC Operations Section – Health & Human Services Branch

The EOC uses the Incident Command System (ICS) organizational structure when activated. The Emergency Medical Services and Public Health Group are located in the Operations Section – Health & Human Services Branch within the EOC ICS structure. Roles during a MCI response may include:

- Provides overall medical-health system (includes all San Francisco hospitals and medical providers) coordination and establishes medical response priorities / objectives for large MCIs or disasters with a large medical-health impact.
- Provides operational and logistical support through other City Agencies or mutual aid requests for out-of-county resources through:
 - Assists patient distribution to out-of-county hospitals.
 - Receiving, tracking and fulfilling requests for medical resources.
 - Coordinating in-coming / out-going requests for medical mutual aid with Medical-Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC).
- Collates and reports situational and response information for situational assessments and reporting within the city and to other local, regional, state and federal government and non-governmental agencies.
- Approves Medical-health related public information for the EOC Joint Information Center.
- Collates incident casualty counts from the field and hospitals.

The Department of Public Health DOC may be activated to assist with any of the above functions for large, complex or multi-site MCIs when the emergency response extends over multiple operational periods.

2.8.4 Role of EOC Operations Section – Fire and Rescue Branch

SFFD EMS and / or private ambulance provider representatives may be located in the Operations Section – Fire and Rescue Branch within the EOC ICS structure (Suppression duties are not addressed in this plan.). EMS roles during a MCI response may include:

- Support for emergency medical responders at the scene.
- Establishment of field response priorities for large, complex or multi-site MCIs.



- Optimize deployment and use of SFFD resources and specialty teams and equipment including:
 - Ambulances
 - Mobile Mass Casualty Unit.
 - SFFD Hazmat Team.
 - SFFD Heavy and light rescue Teams.
- Coordination of in-coming / out-going EMS mutual aid with Medical-Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC).
- Tracking and compiling field patient distribution to receiving facilities.
- Collection and reporting of EMS field situational and response information to the EOC Fire Branch.

The SFFD DOC may be activated to assist with any of the above functions for large, complex or multi-site MCIs when the emergency response extends over multiple operational periods.

Section 2.9 Out-of-County Coordination - Medical Mutual Aid

Mutual Aid is defined as the voluntary provision of services and facilities by other agencies or organizations to assist each other when existing resources are inadequate or depleted. In California, mutual aid generally refers to aid that comes from outside the Operational Area.

Medical Mutual Aid is defined as the voluntary provision of medical services/equipment and medical facilities by other agencies or organizations to assist each other when existing medical resources are inadequate or depleted. Medical Mutual Aid is specific to supplementing / augmenting medical and health resources.

All medical mutual aid requests follow the SEMS and NIMS systems. Medical mutual aid is initiated when the surging of medical resources within San Francisco has been exhausted. It also may be used in medical incidents when it is determined that it may be faster to supplement or augment San Francisco resources from assets outside of the county. For example, San Francisco has several disaster medical field care clinics that may take several hours to set up, supply and staff. Patients would get to medical treatment in less time if they are sent to out-of-county medical facilities using the Medical Mutual Aid process.

In California, counties are grouped into six Mutual Aid regions by the state California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA). The Medical-Health Mutual Aid system uses the same county groupings for its six Mutual Aid regions. San Francisco is in Region 2. Within a region, resources are distributed from the unaffected Operational Area to the affected one. There are three personnel roles that are unique to the Medical Mutual Aid system in California: