
STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

APPROVED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION

EXECUTIVE COURSE
G612

REFERENCE GUIDE
2003

SEMS EXECUTIVE COURSE

INTRODUCTION:

Executives play a key role in emergency management. They are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of their organization in emergencies. They are responsible for organizational readiness, to include planning and training. They are also responsible for policy-making, implementation and monitoring. When properly administered, the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) can assist the executive in achieving success in crisis situations. The goal of this course is to provide executives with a basic understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities in SEMS and to demonstrate the importance of executive participation, before, during, and after an event or crisis situation.

SUPPLEMENTAL COURSE REFERENCES:

- ❖ SEMS Introductory Course Reference Manual
- ❖ SEMS EOC Course, Chapter 3, Management Handbook
- ❖ SEMS Field Course, Orientation I-100

GENERAL TARGET AUDIENCE:

- ❖ Elected Officials
- ❖ Chief Executive Officers
- ❖ City Managers
- ❖ County Administrative Officers
- ❖ Boards of Directors
- ❖ Deputy Directors or Administrators
- ❖ Organization or jurisdictional Department Heads

COURSE DURATION AND DELIVERY OPTIONS:

- ❖ Slide presentation may be used as a framework for an executive briefing or workshop.
- ❖ Course duration may vary but will generally require 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours.

OVERALL COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ Achieve a basic understanding of SEMS, the elements of SEMS Law, the five SEMS Levels and Functions, and the ways that executives can support SEMS in their organization or jurisdiction.
- ❖ Achieve a basic understanding of the Incident Command System and the role of the executive in ICS.
- ❖ Achieve a basic understanding of EOC operating requirements and role of the executive in ensuring inter-agency coordination occurs appropriately within the coordination environment.
- ❖ Identify and achieve a basic understanding of the nature of SEMS planning, training, and guidance documents provided by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

SLIDE PRESENTATION

Discussion Points:

Slide #1: Topics

- ◆ Instructor will review the topics to be covered in this course

Slide #2: What Is SEMS?

- ◆ A Transition Organization
- ◆ Transforms the day-to-day organization into an “emergency response” organization.
- ◆ SEMS attempts to take advantage staff skills and abilities used on a daily basis; incorporating them into the “emergency organization.”

Slide #3: SEMS Was Developed to Improve:

- ◆ The instructor will focus on the importance of the three areas described on the slide.
- ◆ Participants can offer examples of their experiences in emergency response, and comment on the presence or absence of good information flow, coordination, and mobilization / resource tracking.
- ◆ The teaching point is that successful operations normally depend on these factors. Without them, success is difficult to achieve.

Slide #4: Legal Basis for SEMS:

- ◆ Instructor will briefly state the legal origin.
- ◆ SEMS is now part of the Emergency Services Act, G.C. Section 8607.
- ◆ California State agencies **MUST** use SEMS.
- ◆ Local Government must use SEMS to qualify for full reimbursement of Personnel Costs associated with disaster response.

Slide #5: Components of SEMS:

- ◆ Instructor will review the “Components of SEMS.”
- ◆ Incident Command System: Developed by California fire services in the early 1970s, to manage the tactical deployment of personnel and equipment deployed at the field level. SEMS requires the use of the Incident Command System at the field level.
- ◆ Inter-Agency Coordination: A brief overview of the importance of agencies to work together and reach consensus on courses of action.
- ◆ Master Mutual Aid: Reciprocal agreements for emergency assistance, formalized in Law Enforcement and Fire Agencies, but present in other disciplines as well.
- ◆ Operational Areas: The importance of using Operational Areas to coordinate and communicate with local government from the State level during crisis situations. Assures a more effective span of control.

Slide #6&7: SEMS Organizational Levels:

- ◆ **Field Level:**
 - This is the incident level, where the emergency response begins.
 - SEMS requires the use of the Incident Command System at this level.
 - This is where organizational resources and personnel are involved in tactical responses.
 - Refer to the SEMS Introductory reference for more information.

Slide #7: SEMS Organizational Levels: (continued)

- ◆ **Local Government Level:**
 - This is commonly referred to as the “City Emergency Operations Level” in jurisdictional applications, and also applies to Special District and County government Emergency Operations.
 - For all Local Governments, this is the first “coordination” level above the field.
 - Another example would be the relationship between a School District Emergency Operations Center (Coordination), and a School Site Incident Command (Tactical application of resources).
 - The local government level prioritizes and supports all field level operations in a manner consistent with organizational policy.
 - Refer to the SEMS Introductory reference for more information.

◆ **Operational Area Level:**

- The operational area is recognized in SEMS as the geographical boundaries of a county. The operational area level consists of county government and all other political sub-divisions, to include special districts, within that boundary.
- At the operational area level, the governing bodies are required in SEMS to reach consensus on how resources will be allocated in a major crisis affecting multiple jurisdictions or agencies. This is accomplished through inter-agency coordination.
- The Operational Area EOC is generally co-located with the County EOC, but it does not singularly represent county government. All member jurisdictions and agencies have equal influence in establishing priorities and formulating decisions.
- The Region Level (State resources) coordinates more effectively with the operational areas. (better “span-of-control”)
- Refer to the SEMS Introductory reference for more information.

◆ **Region Level (REOC):**

- The Instructor will describe the three Administrative Regions that are part of the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services.
- Inland Region: Sacramento, Coastal Region: Oakland, Southern Region: Los Alamitos.
- Region EOCs, or REOCs prioritize requests and provide support to the Operational Areas in their Regions.
- Refer to the SEMS Introductory reference for more information.

◆ **State Level (SOC):**

- Located in Sacramento at OES Headquarters.
- Provides oversight for the three Regions.
- Coordinates policy-level issues with other state agency executives.
- Provides status information to the Governor and Legislature.
- Refer to the SEMS Introductory reference for more information.

Slide #8: Communication Between SEMS Levels:

- ◆ Communication can occur by traditional land-lines (phones, fax, modem) depending on the damage caused by the disaster or event.
- ◆ OASIS: Operational Area Satellite Information System, provides phone, fax, or computer interaction via satellite. Links OES Regions to each Operational Area.

Slide #8: Communication Between SEMS Levels: (continued)

- ◆ RIMS: Response Information Management System, provides a computer generated information management system for processing and transferring status reports and resource requests. Links OES Regions to each Operational Areas. RIMS is accessed through the Internet.
- ◆ Liaison representatives can provide a personal communications link between all SEMS levels.

Slide #9: SEMS Primary Functions:

- ◆ The Instructor will explain the difference between the Management and Command Functions.
- ◆ The Instructor will provide a brief overview of all General Staff and Management Staff functions using the SEMS Introductory reference.

Slide #10: Role of the Executive in SEMS:

- ◆ The executive is typically at the top of a SEMS organization.
- ◆ The executive is ultimately responsible for the success or failure of the SEMS organization.
- ◆ The executive can increase chances of success by ensuring that planning, training, and policy direction / implementation, are part of the organizational culture.

Slide #11: Planning:

- ◆ Planning for contingencies that will affect your organization is a must!
- ◆ Plans can help define staff roles and responsibilities.
- ◆ Plans can help define emergency procedures.
- ◆ Mitigation plans can formalize time-lines and budgets for facility or site improvements to minimize the impact of disasters.
- ◆ The executive must provide adequate resources (staff and budgetary support) to ensure successful planning efforts.

Slide #12: Training:

- ◆ The importance of training and exercises is stressed here.
- ◆ Contingency Plans have little value if people don't know how to use them.

Slide #12: Training: (continued)

- ◆ The executive can ensure a higher level of readiness by supporting training and exercises.
- ◆ Support means allocating staff time and money for training.
- ◆ Support is also achieved through executive participation in training programs.

Slide #13: Policy Direction:

- ◆ In many instances, normal organizational policy and procedures will not be appropriate for crisis situations.
- ◆ Contingency Plans must clearly outline policy and procedures for different types or categories of events or disasters.
- ◆ The executive cannot singularly implement policy. He / she must delegate authority to other executives and management. The scope and limitations of authority must be clear to those involved.
- ◆ The executive must ensure that established policies and procedures remain appropriate and effective for the particular situation.

Slide #14: The Executive in the EOC:

- ◆ Continue to monitor policy during the response. Be ready to “shift gears” if necessary. Check in with your managers periodically to ensure there is consistency and clarity in your direction.
- ◆ Demonstrate effective leadership. Be a motivator during the crisis. Maintain a positive, “can-do” attitude, despite the arduous working conditions.
- ◆ Do everything you can to support your managers and staff. Make sure they have adequate resources to do their job.
- ◆ Be a positive “agent” for your emergency organization. Welcome managers and executives from other agencies.
- ◆ Finally, empower your managers and staff to carry out your policies. Don’t micro-manage. In most cases, you can lead more effectively “from a distance.”

Slide #15: Legal Authority:

- ◆ Policy-makers (City Councils, Boards of Supervisors, Boards of Directors) may delegate limited powers to a “Director of Emergency Services.” Such as a City Manager, Chief Administrative Officer, or Chief Executive Officer.
- ◆ These executives may proclaim a state of emergency for the purposes of enacting the emergency plan and activating the emergency organization.
- ◆ The policy body must ratify this decision within a reasonable time, and make periodic determinations as to the duration of emergency proclamations. (7 & 14 days respectively)
- ◆ Boards, Councils and other policy-making authorities are also responsible for issuing or ratifying other critical orders such as evacuations and curfews.

NOTE: *The remaining slides address the Incident Command System. The Instructor will determine if it is appropriate to present this topic. If the audience does not have a field response mission and has no desire to cover this material, the Instructor should move forward to the last three slides and conclude the course.*

Option: *The Instructor may proceed through Slides 13 & 14 and provide a basic overview of ICS prior to concluding the course, even though the audience may not have a field response mission.*

Slide #16: Role of the Executive in the Incident Command System:

- ◆ The Instructor will review the topics to be covered.

Slide #17: What is ICS?

- ◆ The Instructor will discuss each of the three general characteristics of the Incident Command System:
 - ICS provides a management structure for organizational resources and personnel deployed in the field. Originally developed by the fire services.
 - ICS principles provided the framework for the development of SEMS. ICS principles can be found in related forms at all SEMS Levels.
 - ICS is a catalyst to tactically implement operational policy developed by agency administrators or executives.

Slide #18: The Mission of Your Organization:

Slide #19:

- ◆ The Instructor will ask the participants to give examples of emergency response field activities involving their organizations or agencies.
- ◆ The Instructor will provide a brief overview of the 5 ICS Field Functions:
 - Command (different than Management)
 - Operations
 - Planning / Intelligence
 - Logistics
 - Finance / Administration
- ◆ ICS can assist multiple agencies or organizations by creating a common command environment.
- ◆ The Instructor and Audience may provide examples of Unified Command and effective Inter-Agency Coordination.

Slide #20: Emergency Response Agencies Under SEMS:

- ◆ The Instructor may reference the SEMS Regulations that require ICS to be used at the Field Level, particularly when multiple agencies respond together.
- ◆ The notion of Inter-agency Coordination should be stressed here. Coordination, Communication, and Cooperation are not “optional.”

Slide #21: Is Your Agency Always “In-Charge?”

- ◆ The “Lead Agency” in a Single Command or Unified Command is typically determined by the following factors:
 - Type of Incident (Who has expertise?)
 - Jurisdiction (Who “owns” the scene)
 - Legal Mandates (Responsibility designated by statute)
 - Degree of Resource Commitment (Who has the majority of resources on scene.)
- ◆ Common sense should dictate the proper designation of a lead agency. Analyzing the determining factors and reaching consensus among the agencies on scene, usually results in the right decision.

Slide #22: Response Options:

- ◆ If yours is not the lead agency, your resources can be applied in a number of different way:
 - Your ranking executive in the field may become part of a Unified Command.
 - Your field staff can assist as part of the Operations or Logistics Function.
 - If you have technical expertise that is important to the success of the field response, your staff may become part of Planning Intelligence as a specialist or advisor.

Slide #23: Leadership in the Field:

- ◆ The Instructor will cover the points on the slide.
- ◆ The emphasis here is on “working together.”
- ◆ Executives who designate other executives or managers to field assignments should carefully evaluate leadership abilities and interpersonal skills. Particularly in high profile events or where other agencies are involved.
- ◆ Finally, your field leaders need to know the limits of their decision range as relates to organizational or agency policy. You should be available to respond in situations where there is potential for a significant social, economic, or political impact to your agency.

Slide #24: Summary and Conclusions:

Slide #25:

Slide #26: The Instructor will summarize, address questions and conclude.