

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Department: Office of Emergency Management

Title of Approving Official: Director of Emergency Management

Date Effective: 08/17/2026

Date of Next Review: 08/01/2031

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) as the central command, control, and coordination facility for municipal emergency operations during declared emergencies, disasters and incidents requiring multi-departmental and/or multi-jurisdictional response.

2. POLICY

The Town shall manage all emergencies and disasters using the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). During routine incidents, operational command shall remain with the designated Incident Commander operating under the Incident Command System (ICS). When an incident exceeds the operational capabilities or jurisdictional authority of a single department or requires a coordinated multi-departmental or multi-agency response, the EOC may be activated in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Town's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

The EOC serves as the Town's central command, control, and coordination facility for managing municipal emergency operations during significant emergencies and disasters. Upon activation, the EOC assumes operational control of municipal resources and coordinates the activities of all participating departments and agencies to achieve community-wide emergency management objectives.

The EOC is responsible for establishing strategic priorities, directing the allocation and reassignment of municipal personnel, equipment, and other resources, coordinating interdepartmental operations, managing mutual aid and external assistance, and maintaining a common operating picture for executive leadership. The EOC also coordinates continuity of government, continuity of operations, emergency public information, and the transition from response to recovery.

Incident Commanders retain command of tactical operations within their assigned incident areas and are responsible for directing on-scene personnel, implementing the Incident Action Plan, and ensuring responder safety. The EOC provides for a unified municipal response by integrating the capabilities of local departments with regional, state, federal, private-sector, volunteer and mutual aid partners to

ensure that incident objectives are aligned with community priorities and that limited resources are effectively coordinated across complex incidents or competing operational demands.

3. DEFINITIONS

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): A centralized command post where key officials, first responders, and emergency managers gather to coordinate large-scale disaster and critical incident responses, allocate resources and share critical information.

Emergency Operations Plan (EOP): is a written guide that outlines how the Town of Milton will respond to a large-scale disaster or critical incident. It serves as a flexible framework and details chain of command, communications policies, and what steps to take in order to protect life and restore normal operations. The Emergency Operations Plan is comprised of four core components:

- A. **Base Plan:** The base plan provides an overview of the Town's Emergency Management Organization, assigns official roles and provides the framework and structure by which the Town will operate during complex emergencies and disasters.
- B. **Emergency Support Functions (ESF):** Emergency Support Functions provide detailed guidelines for specific emergency tasks and responsibilities such as evacuations, communications, medical, sheltering, etc. ESFs assign roles and responsibilities within the Town's Emergency Management Organization.
- C. **Hazard-Specific Annexes:** These guides provide more specific instructions for unique threats or incidents which may require additional coordination and resources due to their complexity.
- D. **Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP):** This plan focuses on the internal function of town government operations to ensure the continuation of essential functions during emergencies and disasters. The Town's Continuity of Government (COG) plan is embedded within the COOP to ensure the Town maintains the authority to initiate and implement both emergency and administrative functions during activations of the EOP.

Incident Command System (ICS): A standardized management framework for coordinating and controlling responses to critical incidents, disasters, or large-scale planned events. It provides a flexible and scalable hierarchy to allocate resources, establish objectives, and manage personnel. The Incident Command System is comprised of five core components:

- A. **Command:** The central authority responsible for setting objectives, approving incident action plans, coordinating response operations, and maintaining overall responsibility over the emergency.
- B. **Operations:** Oversees the tactical side of the response and is responsible for assigning resources to achieve objectives and manage the emergency at the scene.

- C. **Planning:** Responsible for collecting, evaluating and processing situational information and developing Incident Action Plans.
- D. **Logistics:** The support system that procures, tracks and delivers resources, services, and facilities required to manage the incident, both at the scene and within the Emergency Operations Center.
- E. **Finance/Administration:** Handles all financial tracking, purchasing, cost analysis and personnel related issues for the duration of the emergency.

Command-and-Control (C2): The Command-and-Control Section serves as the executive operational component of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Section provides centralized command, coordination, and control of municipal emergency operations by translating policy decisions into operational direction, establishing strategic priorities, and coordinating the deployment of municipal resources in support of emergency response operations.

EOC Director: The EOC Director is responsible for the overall management, direction, and coordination of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Through the Command-and-Control section, the EOC Director provides strategic leadership for municipal emergency operations, ensures effective coordination among departments and partner agencies, and serves as the principal advisor for elected officials and executive leadership on emergency management matters and incident priorities.

Incident Commander (IC): The Incident Commander is the individual responsible for the overall management of an incident and exercises command authority over tactical operations conducted at the incident scene in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). The Incident Commander is responsible for achieving incident objectives while ensuring responder safety, protecting life and property, and stabilizing the incident.

Unified Command (UC): Unified Command is established when an incident involves multiple jurisdictions, agencies, or organizations with legal, geographic, or functional responsibility. Unified Command enables those agencies to jointly manage the incident through a single, integrated command structure while maintaining their individual legal authorities and responsibilities.

4. EOC STAFFING

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be staffed using a scalable organization that is commensurate with the complexity, size, and anticipated duration of the incident. Staffing levels shall be determined by the EOC Director based on operational needs, incident objectives, resource availability and will adhere to the framework outlined in the Town's EOP.

The EOC may be staffed by representatives from municipal departments, partner agencies, and supporting organizations whose expertise or authority is required to support emergency operations. Personnel assigned to the EOC shall possess the authority to make decisions, commit departmental

resources within established limits, coordinate with their respective organizations, and communicate operational information on behalf of their department or agency.

A) Initial Staffing

Upon activation, the EOC Director shall determine the initial staffing requirements.

Initial staffing may include:

- EOC Director
- Department or Agency Representatives
- Administrative Support
- Additional positions shall be activated as incident complexity increases.

B) Expanded Staffing

As operational requirements expand, the EOC organization may include functional sections consistent with the Incident Command System (ICS), including:

- Command-and-Control
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance and Administration

Section Chiefs may be assigned as needed and shall supervise any assigned personnel and coordinate activities within their functional area in support of the EOC's strategic objectives.

C) Department Representatives

Each municipal department shall designate primary and alternate representatives to staff the EOC when requested. Representatives shall:

- Serve as the primary point of contact for their department.
- Coordinate departmental resources and personnel.
- Communicate operational status and resource needs.

- Participate in planning and decision-making.
- Implement EOC directives within their department.
- Maintain communication with departmental leadership.

Representatives shall have sufficient authority to commit departmental resources or have immediate access to individuals with such authority.

D) Staffing by Activation Level

Level 1	Normal Operations	The EOC is in a state of non-activation.
Level 2	Enhanced Operations	The EOC is typically staffed through the Office of Emergency Management for the purpose of monitoring conditions, maintaining situational awareness, and preparing for the potential escalation of preplanned or evolving incidents.
Level 3	Partial Activation	The EOC shall be staffed by personnel from departments with direct responsibilities relating to the incident, together with those responsible for command and coordination functions. Additional personnel may be assigned as operational requirements dictate and in accordance with the Town's EOP.
Level 4	Full Activation	The EOC shall be staffed by representatives from all essential municipal departments and supporting agencies. EOC staffing may need to support a 24-hour operational schedule using established operational periods and personnel rotations to ensure continuity of operations, as determined by the nature of the incident, and in accordance with the Town's EOP.

E) Personnel Responsibilities

Personnel assigned to the EOC shall:

- Report promptly upon activation.
- Maintain situational awareness within their area of responsibility.

- Participate in operational briefings and planning meetings.
- Coordinate departmental actions with EOC objectives.
- Document significant actions and decisions.
- Maintain accurate records of resource requests, assignments, and expenditures.
- Support the transition from response to recovery.

F) Operational Periods

When the EOC is established at a Level 3 or Level 4 activation, there shall be a pre-determined operational period used for staffing positions within the EOC. The standard operational period shall be 12 hours, unless otherwise determined by the EOC Director.

G) Training

Personnel who have been selected and identified to staff EOC positions shall complete required training in the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Incident Command System (ICS), EOC procedures, and any position-specific responsibilities, prior to assignment within the EOC. The Office of Emergency Management will ensure that there are sufficient personnel trained to support extended EOC operations.

The following trainings are required to be completed by personnel staffing EOC operations:

- ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System
- ICS-200: Basic Incident Command System
- IS-700: NIMS Introduction
- IS-800: National Response Framework
- All-Hazards Position Specific Training (As determined by the Office of Emergency Management)

5. INCIDENT COMMAND / UNIFIED COMMAND

Incident Commanders shall maintain command of tactical operations within their respective areas of responsibility as identified in the Town's EOP. Each department or agency is responsible for developing and maintaining any policies or procedures relating to their assigned Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), as outlined in the Town's EOP.

When incidents involve multiple jurisdictions or agencies, Unified Command may be established. The EOC shall coordinate with Unified Command and provide strategic direction regarding municipal priorities, resource allocation, and emergency management objectives.

Incident Commanders shall:

- Report significant developments to the EOC.
- Submit resource requests through established channels and track the arrival and allocation of said resources.
- Operate in accordance with strategic priorities established by the EOC.
- Coordinate incident objectives with community-wide emergency management objectives established by the EOC.

6. COMMAND-AND-CONTROL SECTION

Upon a Partial or Full Activation of the EOC, a Command-and-Control Section will be established, and all emergency management and response operations will be guided by the Town's EOP. The Command-and-Control Section may establish subordinate sections and may activate necessary Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) as needed to support or commence response and recovery operations, in accordance with the Town's EOP. Department heads and agency representatives assigned to the EOC will operate in accordance with directives issued by the Command-and-Control Section. ***Nothing in this policy shall be construed to supersede the statutory authority of an Incident Commander or prevent the Incident Commander from taking immediate actions necessary to protect life, property, or responder safety.***

Department heads shall maintain authority over their personnel and resources but shall coordinate significant resource deployments and emergency actions through the EOC to ensure alignment with municipal priorities.

When multiple incidents or competing demands exist, the Command-and-Control Section may prioritize the allocation of municipal resources based on:

- Life safety considerations.
- Incident stabilization requirements.
- Protection of critical infrastructure.
- Continuity of essential government services.
- Protection of property and the environment.

A) Authority During Partial Activation

When the EOC is activated at **Level 3 (Partial Activation)**, the Command-and-Control Section shall provide localized coordination and management of municipal resources as necessary to support and coordinate incident operations, maintain continuity of essential government functions, and provide for the protection of life and property.

This authority includes:

- Coordinate municipal response activities among affected departments.
- Establish strategic priorities for municipal operations.
- Monitor incident objectives and community impacts.
- Resolve resource conflicts between departments.
- Coordinate mutual aid requests and external assistance.
- Provide emergency policy recommendations to elected officials and executive leadership.
- Ensure situational awareness and communication is maintained across all participating agencies.

If incident conditions escalate beyond the coordination capabilities of a Partial Activation, the EOC Director may elevate to Full Activation, at which time Command-and-Control authorities may be expanded and implemented in accordance with this policy and the Town's EOP.

B) Authority During Full Activation

When the EOC is activated at **Level 4 (Full Activation)**, the Command-and-Control Section will assume overall command and coordination of all municipal resources in support of community-wide emergency response and recovery objectives.

This authority includes:

- Coordination of emergency operations and establishment of strategic objectives to resolve competing resource needs.
- Direction, assignment and allocation of municipal resources across departments to maintain continuity of government and operations.
- Reviews and approvals of Incident Action Plans.
- Coordination of evacuations and sheltering operations.
- Coordination of public information and warning.

- Direction and activation of Emergency Support Functions (ESFs).
- Requesting and coordinating mutual aid and external assistance from local, state and federal partners.
- Advises elected officials on emergency policy decisions.
- Direction of recovery operations.

C) Activation Authority

The following officials may activate the EOC:

- Town Manager / Deputy Town Manager
- Director of Emergency Management

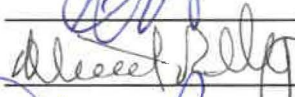
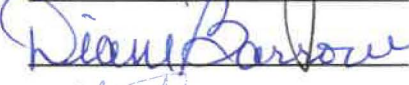
D) Delegation of Authority

Pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 6, the legislative body of a municipality shall establish a local organization for emergency management and shall appoint an emergency management director who shall have direct responsibility for the organization, administration, and coordination of the local organization for emergency management, subject to the direction and control of the chief executive officer or legislative body. In the instance of a vacancy or absence of the emergency management director, the chief executive officer shall assume all duties and responsibilities conferred under this statute and within this policy.



town of
miltonvt
SELECTBOARD

Dated at Milton, Vermont this 17th day of August, 2026.

 Darren Adams, Chair
 Michael Morgan, Vice Chair
 Diane Barrows, Clerk
 Leland Morgan, Member
 Betsy Paret, Member

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