

Alexander County Emergency Operations Center Standard Operating Guidelines



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Revisions

Revisions	Date	Person Making Changes	Changes Made
1	July-October 2024	D. Fox	Initial Plan

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ALEXANDER COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES (SOG)

1. Purpose

This SOG aims to establish standard guidelines for the activation and operation of the Alexander County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

2. Scope

This SOG includes organizational and functional procedures necessary to activate the EOC quickly and operate the facility efficiently. This annex applies to all county personnel and other individuals assigned to the EOC.

3. General

- a. Facility: The EOC is located at the Emergency Services Office at 75 1st St SW in Taylorsville, NC 28681. The backup facility is located at CVCC Alexander Campus at 345 Industrial Boulevard in Taylorsville, NC 28681.
- b. Function: The Emergency Operations Center provides the necessary space and facilities for the centralized direction and control of the following functions:
 - 1. Command and control of emergency response and recovery operations.
 - 2. Communications and early warning.
 - 3. Damage assessment and reporting.
 - 4. Containment and/or control of hazardous materials incidents or emergencies.
 - 5. Dissemination of severe weather watches and warnings.
 - 6. Actions to protect the health and safety of the general public, to include:
 - a. Public information, instruction, and directions.
 - b. Evacuation of people from hazardous or damaged areas.
 - c. Control of shelter operations
- c. Staff: The Alexander County EOC will be staffed by representatives of county and city governments involved in emergency operations and volunteers from various non-government organizations. These individuals may be department heads or their designated representatives. The representative must be authorized to speak for the department head and commit resources in his/her absence.

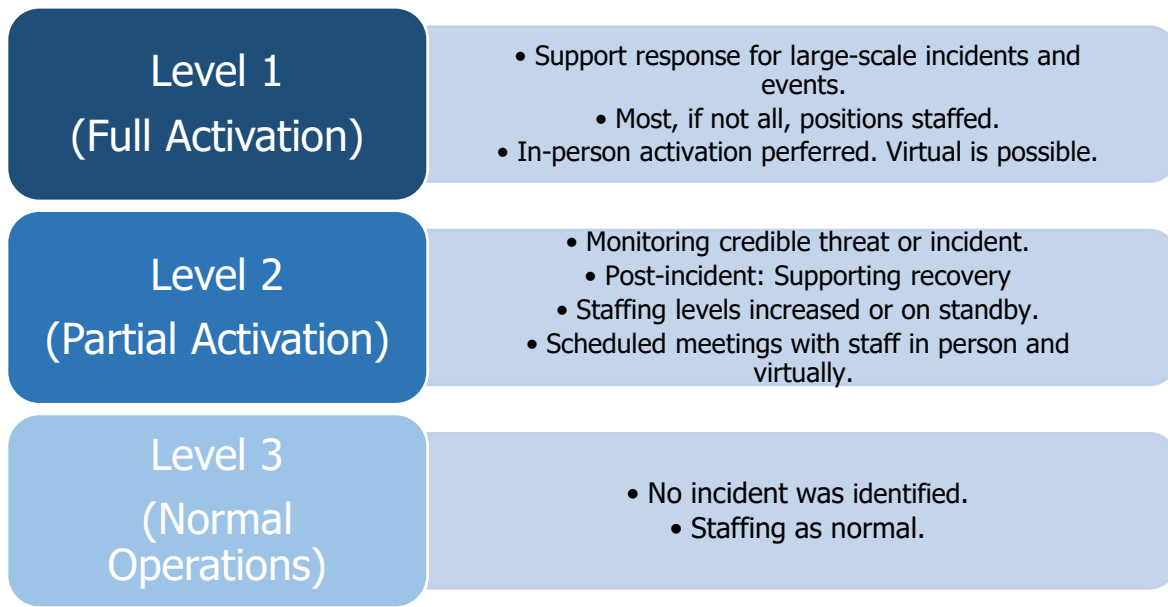
4. Organization

- a. Personnel assigned to the Emergency Operations Center will be assigned to a functional group by the EOC Director. Major management activities will organize the EOC. See Annex B for organizational structure. These groups are:
 - 1. Board of County Commissioners: The Board of County Commissioners forms this group and focuses on the overall strategy for the county emergency response and recovery operations. This may be referred to as the Multiagency Coordination (MAC) group. They will approve all response and recovery strategies and set other policies as needed. The Commissioners will issue any declaration of a state of emergency and will rescind this declaration when no longer needed.

2. The County Manager will implement the decisions of the BOCC. He/she will guide the EOC Director to ensure unity of effort in the County's emergency operations. The EOC Director will direct response and recovery operations and supervise the EOC. Positions of the EOC Organizational Chart that are not filled will be the responsibility of the EOC Director. The County Public Information Officer (PIO) and a Liaison Officer should be assigned to assist the EOC Director
 - a. The PIO will set up and oversee the Joint Information Center (JIC) and the Local Information Team (LIT) to ensure public information and warnings are met with unified messaging.
 - b. The Liaison Officer will work with Agency Representatives coordinating with internal and external agencies such as Law, EMS, Fire, DSS, utility companies, etc.
3. Situational Awareness Group: This group will coordinate with incident command posts. This group will maintain awareness of current issues, assignment progress, future planning, maintaining documentation, and reporting weather forecasts. The Situational Awareness Group may need to be divided into Divisions or Groups to improve or maintain quality span of control with those working the event.
4. Resource Support Group: This group will be responsible for logistics. The group leader may be referred to as the Logistical Section Chief and will oversee all resource ordering and tracking. This group should be familiar with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) resource tracking and ordering through WebEOC. Resource focus will be on life safety and property conservation, and will be responsible for equipment, specialized teams, feeding, and facilities used.
5. Center Support Group: This group will work closely with the other two groups to ensure policy and procedures are followed and met. This group will consist of a County Finance staff member and a County Attorney. A credentialed Finance Section Chief may be requested to assist the group in working with the County Finance representative. This group will be responsible for tracking expenditures, reviewing contracts, approving emergency vendors, and providing emergency Purchase Orders (POs).
6. Agency representatives will report to the Liaison Officer. The group of agency representatives may change depending on the nature of the emergency. These representatives should be available to provide updates regarding their agency. This will include resource needs, capabilities that can be provided to meet a gap, and general updates.

5. Concept of Operations

- A. Activation Levels of the Emergency Operations Center
 1. There will be three levels of EOC activation. Level 1 is fully activated, 2 is partially activated, and 3 is normal operations.



B. Activation of the Emergency Operations Center

1. Warnings/Alerts (see Annex C)

- i. Source and Means of Receipt: Sources and means are shown below. Warnings or directed messages will be verified to preclude unnecessary reactions to an erroneous notification.
 - 1. On-the-scene public safety personnel
 - 2. National Weather Service Greenville/Spartanburg office
 - 3. North Carolina State Highway Patrol
 - 4. Alexander County or other municipal communications centers
 - 5. North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, Western Branch Office
 - 6. News media
- ii. Authorized Recipients for Emergency Messages:
 - 1. Alexander County Communications Center
 - 2. Alexander County Emergency Management Coordinator or his/her representative

2. Alerting Procedures: Upon receipt of an authentic warning message, the Emergency Management Coordinator will:

- i. Consult with the appropriate County officials and make recommendations for the activation of the EOC.
- ii. Initiate alerting/notification procedures using Annex C to this SOG.
- iii. Officials alerted by the action prescribed above will alert those individuals and/or departments for which they are responsible.
- 3. Activation: The EOC will be considered activated when sufficient personnel for operation is physically present and all communications systems are operational.
- 4. Reporting: All personnel arriving for duty in the EOC will report to the Emergency Management Coordinator, the shift leader, or their section leaders.
- 5. The initial situation briefing will be provided by the Emergency Management Coordinator when the EOC is activated. Subsequent briefings will be held at shift changes and other briefings will be conducted as needed. The briefing format is in Annex F.

6. Personnel Support

- a. Personnel who are staffing the EOC should come prepared with all supplies and equipment to perform their duties. The EOC will have basic office supplies available upon activation, but each agency or department will need to provide any special forms, records, etc. for use in the EOC.
- b. Each duty position should have a computer linked to the County network, which will permit internet access. Each position should have a Microsoft Teams Group for their groups and then each supervisor should have access to an EOC Leadership Group.
- c. Meals will be provided for the shift on duty.
- d. If the situation requires it, the off-duty shift will have sheltering coordinated for overnight stay. Alexander County cannot house anyone overnight and overnight accommodations would be case by case. Shower facilities are available at various emergency service agencies. Meals will be provided to the off-duty shift in these situations. EOC personnel should prepare a change of clothing, toilet articles, and bedding, and have this available when they arrive at the EOC.
- e. If EOC personnel are not able to reach the facility due to severe weather, blocked roads, or civil unrest, they should immediately contact the EOC. The Shift Leader on duty will send a county vehicle to pick up any personnel that cannot reach the EOC. These individuals will be advised that there may be a long delay in returning them home after their shift is over.

7. Demobilization

- a. After an emergency event or when designated by the EM Coordinator, the EOC will be closed and all equipment will be returned to its ready condition. The shift leader on duty will notify the NCEM SEOC that the county EOC is closed and update WebEOC.
- b. All files, emails, and documents from the operations will be retained. All EOC staff members will download these items to storage media and provide this to the EM Coordinator. After this is accomplished, the staff members can return to their day-to-day operations.

8. Maintenance of Standard Operating Guidelines

This SOG will be reviewed yearly and after any EOC activation to ensure it meets the requirements. All changes will be shared with all departments and agencies that operate in the Emergency Operations Center.

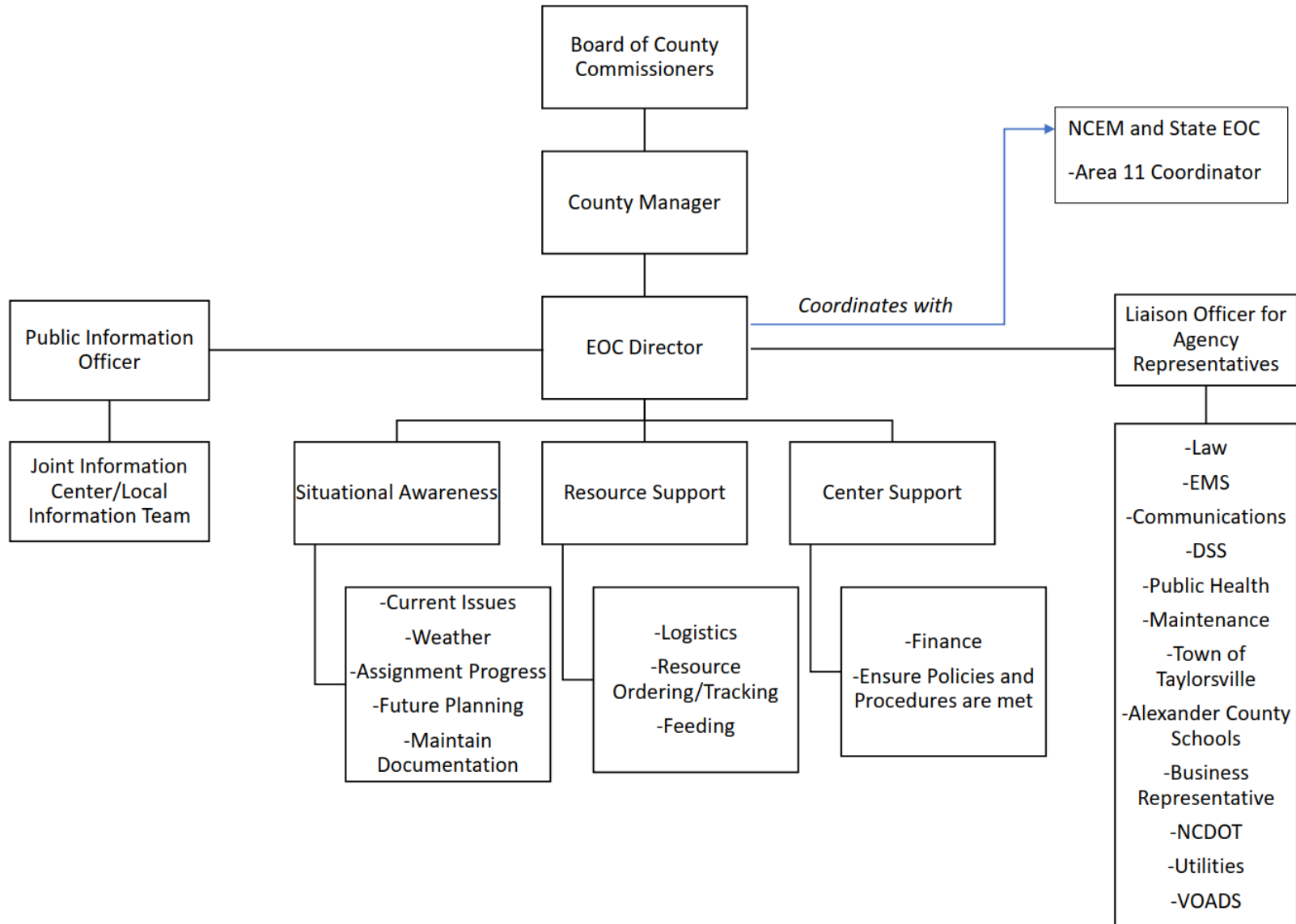
9. Annexes

- A - EOC Floor Plan
- B - EOC Organization
- C - Alert Procedure for EOC Personnel
- D - EOC Activation
- E - Security and Personnel Access
- F - Shift Change Briefing Format

ANNEX A EOC FLOORPLAN



**ANNEX B
EOC ORGANIZATION**



ANNEX C

ALERT PROCEDURE FOR EOC PERSONNEL

1. Purpose. This annex establishes the procedures for alerting of EOC personnel.

2. Scope. This procedure provides instructions on the receipt of emergency warning information and the procedure for alerting the EOC staff members. This annex applies to all county personnel and other individuals assigned to the EOC.

3. Concept of Operations

a. Emergency/Warning Messages. The Communications Center and the Emergency Management staff will verify all warnings and alerts. During duty hours, warning messages will be forwarded to Emergency Management.

b. County Government Leader Alert Roster

1. The "reverse 911" system in use at the County Communications Center will be the primary method used to alert County government leaders and other key personnel. The Emergency Management Coordinator and the Communications Director will develop alert rosters to be used with the system.
2. If this system is unavailable, Emergency Management will alert key leaders and those department heads that send representatives to the Emergency Operations Center.
3. Answering machines/voicemail: The caller will leave the alert message but also call the next name on the roster.
4. Each department and agency of Alexander County Government will develop an internal alert roster for use in emergencies.
5. Messages should be relayed precisely and confirmed with a readback of the alert and instructions.
6. Individuals who are not needed immediately may be notified to rest, as they will fill in for the next operations period relieving individuals being called in immediately.
7. Once notified, staff should take appropriate action to respond safely and timely to their instructed area with all required equipment and expectations to work longer than normal hours.

ANNEX D

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER ACTIVATION

1. Purpose. This annex establishes the actions and procedures to be used to place the Emergency Operations Center into operation.

2. Scope. This annex provides information on the activation of the EOC, the display boards, the EOC telephone system, and the deactivation of the EOC after operations. This information will be used by the EOC staff.

3. Concept of Operations.

- a. The EOC is a multipurpose room and may require rearranging furniture and setting up workstations. Each pair of display boards is operational from a mounted computer. These computers are checked every three weeks. There is one desk phone in the EOC located in the Community Paramedic work area. There are eight Ethernet ports in the EOC with five of the eight being used at all times for the GIS computer and plotter and each of the mounted computers. The other three ports can be utilized to wire into the ShoreTel phone system and then a workstation. Emergency Services workers may have to bring desk phones with them to the EOC. The display boards are turned on with the mounted computer with the keyboard, mouse, and television remote being mounted behind each station. The display board on the right-hand side of the room will be dedicated to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD). The display board on the left-hand side of the room will be dedicated to the weather display. The large display board can be used as a smart TV for local news channels, displaying dashboards, WebEOC data, or presentations.
- b. Activation of the EOC: When the Emergency Management Coordinator directs that the EOC will be activated, the Emergency Management staff will take the following actions:
 1. Update WebEOC of the activation of the EOC
 2. Turn on each display system in the EOC
 3. Log in to CAD for the right-hand display, open web browsers for weather on the left-hand display, and turn on and display pertinent data on the main display.
 4. Ensure furniture is set up for workstations and communications as individuals arrive at the EOC.
 5. Set up a workstation to begin tracking situation reports and provide support to Incident Management Team(s) (IMTs).
 6. Announce the activation of the EOC on all dispatch channels
- c. EOC Telephone Numbers/Email Addresses
 1. The telephone system is always operational and requires no special activation. EOC staff may bring their own desk telephone and set up in the EOC to assist with verbal communications.
 2. The main EOC telephone number is 828-632-9336. All incoming calls will be routed from this number to the desired extension by the caller. Outgoing calls are placed in the same manner as the County government phone system.

3. Contact information will be maintained per shift on a modified ICS Form 205A which will also serve as a shift sign-in sheet.
- d. Deactivation of the EOC
1. After an emergency event or when designated by the EM Coordinator, the EOC will be closed and all equipment will be returned to its ready condition. The shift leader on duty will notify the NCEM EOC that the county EOC is closed.
 2. All files, emails, and documents from the operations will be retained. All EOC staff members will download these items to storage media and provide this to the EM Coordinator.
 3. All computers, chairs, and furniture will be returned to their storage positions.
 4. The computers and display boards will be turned off and returned to standby status.
 5. All trash will be collected and deposited in cans for disposal.
 6. No EOC staff personnel will be released until these tasks are accomplished.

ANNEX E

SECURITY AND PERSONNEL ACCESS

1. Purpose. This annex establishes the procedures to secure the Emergency Operations Center when activated and the procedures for personnel access to the facility.

2. Scope. To provide information on EOC physical security and control personnel access to the EOC. This annex assigns the responsibilities for these tasks. These procedures apply to all county personnel and other EOC members.

3. Concept of Operations

a. The County Emergency Operations Center is located in the Emergency Services Building at 75 1st St SW in Taylorsville. Only authorized personnel are permitted access to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Sheriff's Office (SO) will provide local security for the EOC and control access to the EOC area. The Emergency Management Coordinator will maintain access rosters of EOC personnel and access badges, which will be provided to the Sheriff's Office upon activation of the EOC.

b. EOC Activation: The EOC has two levels of activation: partial and full. The procedures for securing the EOC are the same for both levels. The EOC area is defined as the EOC, the adjacent hallways, and offices.

c. Upon activation of the EOC, the officers on duty will not allow anyone into the EOC area unless they are on the access roster and have the proper EOC access badge. An EM representative will provide the SO officers with an access control roster, a sign-in sheet, and access badges. All EOC personnel will sign in and out of the EOC area, and must wear the access badge at a readily visible point on the front of outer clothing. Personnel departing the EOC area will turn in their badge, which will be returned to them upon return and sign-in. Authorized visitors to the EOC will sign in and be issued a visitor badge. If necessary, EM will provide an escort to the EOC for the visitors.

d. All entry into the EOC will be restricted upon activation. All doors without electronic coded locks will be secured. Unauthorized visitors, such as media representatives, County workers not assigned to the EOC, family members, etc. will not be permitted access to the EOC area unless approved by the Emergency Management Coordinator and will be escorted to the EOC by EM personnel or a designated escort. Visitors from media organizations will be escorted at all times.

e. State and federal emergency management personnel will use "Visitor" badges for EOC access.

f. Local County staff should limit the number of departmental staff to essential personnel and those in decision-making authority to keep from overcrowding.

f. When the Emergency Management Coordinator declares the EOC closed, all personnel will sign out and turn in access badges to the officers on duty at the main desk. A representative from Emergency Management will collect the sign-in roster and the access badges after the EOC closes.

4. Duties and Responsibilities.

- a. Emergency Management Coordinator
 1. Establish and maintain a roster of all personnel authorized to access the EOC
 2. Develop an EOC access badge for both authorized personnel and visitors. Maintain these badges in the Emergency Management office and provide them to the officers on duty at the main entrance to the EOC. Collect these badges from the duty officer upon closure of the EOC.
 3. Develop and issue a sign-in roster with the access badges. Collect the roster upon closure of the EOC and maintain it with the after-action review notes for the operation.
 4. Sign in and escort all visitors to the EOC. Assist the duty officer at the desk in determining individual visitor access to the EOC. Sign out all visitors at the duty officer's desk.
 5. Stay alert for unauthorized visitors in the EOC area. Detain the individual and report the problem. Call Sheriff's Deputies for assistance, if necessary.
- b. Sheriff's Office
 1. Provide local security and access control for the EOC area.
 2. Upon EOC activation, secure all entryways without electronic coded locks and direct foot traffic.
 3. Screen all people seeking access to the EOC area. Authorized personnel will be listed on the access roster and will have an EOC access badge. Sign all authorized personnel and visitors into and out of the EOC area. Ensure that visitors are escorted to the EOC area if necessary. Retain the badge of all personnel and visitors who are leaving. If there is a question on access call the Shift Leader in the EOC for clarification.
 4. Stay alert for unauthorized visitors in the EOC area. All personnel not from the Sheriff's Office in the EOC area must display an access badge. If the individual does not have an access badge, detain and escort them from the area. Assist EOC personnel in removing unauthorized visitors.
 5. Do not allow any personnel without EOC access to enter through electronically secured doors into the EOC area.
 6. Remain clear of the EOC room unless individuals have a specific reason to enter the area.
 7. Turn in access badges and sign-in rosters to the Emergency Management office when the EOC closes down.
- c. Department Representatives
 1. Once alerted, the department representatives for the first operational period report to the EOC.
 2. The department representatives will enter the Emergency Services Office from the front entrance and will sign for their EOC access badges, which include the key cards needed to enter the EOC. Do not loan out or swap badges or key cards with other personnel.
 3. All personnel operating in the EOC must wear the access badge at a readily visible point on the front of outer clothing. Personnel are responsible for their access badge throughout the operational period. At the end of each operational period, badges should be signed back in and returned to the Shift Leader.
 4. Report lost, stolen, or damaged access badges to the EOC Shift Leader as soon as the loss or damage is discovered.

5. Any additional department personnel needed for EOC operations will be approved by the EM Coordinator or the Shift Leader. These additional personnel will use visitor access badges.

ANNEX F

SHIFT CHANGE BRIEFING FORMAT

1. Purpose. This annex specifies the format for shift change briefings in the Emergency Operations Center.

2. Scope. This annex provides information on the format to be used for shift change briefings in the EOC. This information will be used by all County personnel and other individuals assigned to the EOC.

3. Concept of Operations

- a. The EOC staff will conduct two shift change briefings per day. Shift change occurs at 0700 and 1900 daily. The briefings will be conducted thirty minutes before shift change, at 0630 and 1830. This schedule may be modified by the EOC Director based on the incident.
- b. The object of these briefings is to ensure continuity of effort during response and recovery operations and that the EOC staff is aware of all current and future operations. The Shift Leader will facilitate the briefing.
- c. Sequence of Briefing:
 1. EOC Director
 2. EOC Control Group — County Commissioners and/or County Manager
 3. Situation Awareness Group
 4. EOC Liaison Officer
 5. Resource Support Group
 6. Center Support Group
 - a. Finance
 - b. Legal
 7. Public Information Officer/Joint Information Center
 8. EOC Director for closing remarks
- d. Control Group Briefing will provide any updates from County Commissioners or County Manager reviewing priorities and objectives and addressing any changes.
- e. The Situation Group will provide an update on the following:
 1. Current events
 2. Progress made since the last operations period
 3. Unresolved issues
 4. Resources assigned
 5. Resources demobilized
 6. Current weather situation
 7. Planned operations for the next 12 hours
- f. The Liaison Officer will provide an overall update for agencies and departments, and schedule agencies involved to provide a departmental update if needed. Department updates could involve:
 1. NCDOT — Road closures and road status
 2. EMS — Status of emergency medical care with the number of patients seen and transported
 3. Law — Intelligence, investigation progress, and potential concerns
 4. DSS — Sheltering updates with the number of individuals seeking shelter

5. Health — Health concerns and environmental health investigations
6. Public Works — Damage assessments and debris management
7. Tax Office — Damage assessment values and progress
8. Alexander County Schools — Update on school closures, needs, or resources availability
- g. The Resource Support Group will address the following:
 1. Resources requested
 2. Delayed resources or any issues
 3. Feeding
 4. Facility Use Agreements
- h. The Center Support Group:
 1. Finance Group
 - a. For the County Finance briefing, the representative will include the total cost of operations for the past 12-hour period. This will include supply/equipment/contract costs and personnel overtime hours worked.
 - b. Anticipated expenditures.
 2. Legal Group
 - a. Address any legal concerns, contracts, and policy concerns.
- i. Public Information Officer/Joint Information Center:
 - a. PIO/JIC will provide an update on current and future messaging objectives and progress.
 - b. Discuss any scheduled media visits and press conferences.
 - c. Address public concerns being seen throughout social media and suggestions on rumor control.
 - d. Ensure all agencies are working with the Joint Information Center for unified messaging.
- j. After the briefing and any discussion, the EOC Director will announce shift change and note the time. At that point, the personnel coming on duty will occupy their duty stations, receive individual briefs from the off-duty shift, and the off-duty shift will depart the EOC.