

ANNEX T SPECIAL POPULATIONS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for local emergency response personnel working with members of the community who have special considerations. Members of the community who may have special considerations could include those who are deaf and hard of hearing, totally and legally blind, with cognitive, developmental, or physical disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency. Our mission is to assure access to emergency preparedness, response, and recovery services for the vulnerable and hardest to reach populations.

II. SITUATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Situations

1. Emergency responders and other rescue personnel may experience communication barriers while assisting community members who are deaf or hard of hearing, people with cognitive or developmental disabilities, persons with mental illness and those with limited English proficiency.
2. Community members who have cognitive impairments, physical disabilities, have limited English- proficiency, who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, or totally and legally blind may live independently, in community based/assisted living settings, in long term care facilities, or may be homeless.
3. Major needs of special populations may include assistance with evacuation and transportation, sheltering, and receiving warnings and public information.
4. Disabilities can be temporary, chronic, episodic, visible, invisible, etc.
5. Some people with special considerations will identify the need for assistance during emergency situations, others will not.
6. Some people may utilize hearing dogs, service dogs, and seeing-eye dogs, therefore accommodations for animals should be considered when working on evacuation planning.
7. Members of the community who are deaf and hard of hearing, totally and legally blind, have limited English proficiency, have physical, cognitive or developmental disabilities and persons with mental illness are especially vulnerable during a disaster.

Assumptions

1. Community resources such as interpreters, health care personnel, and housing managers will provide assistance to members of the community and emergency response personnel who require their assistance.

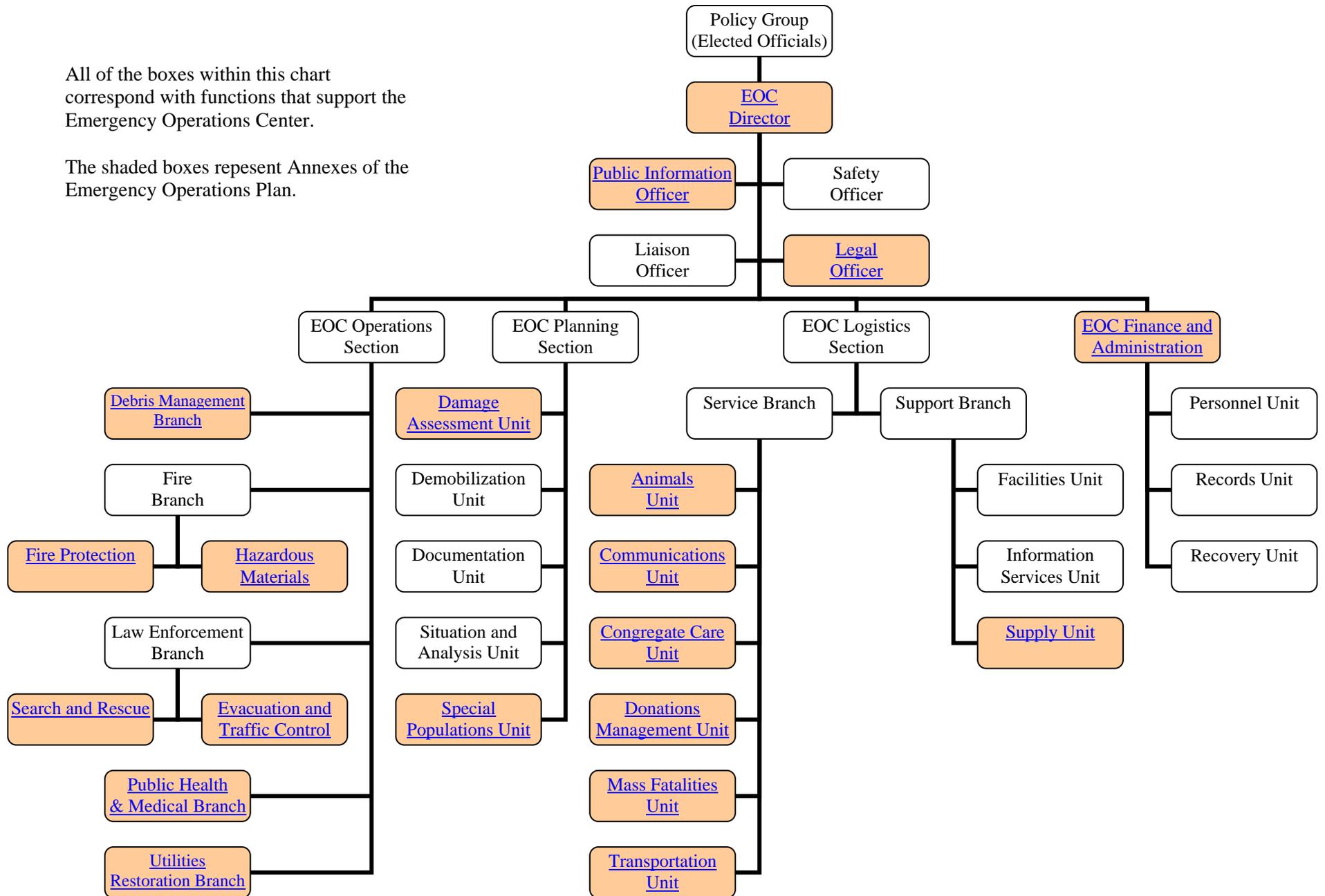
2. Many community members with special considerations have support networks that will provide needed assistance for the individuals in the event of an emergency/disaster.
3. Citizen Corps programs may be able to assist members of the community requiring additional assistance, who live in their neighborhoods, during times of emergency/disaster.
4. Some residents of Stearns County/City of St. Cloud have created personal emergency plans and disaster supply kits, to care for themselves in the event of a disaster/emergency.
5. Some members of the community, especially those who are homeless, may not have access to emergency warning and notification or to public information disseminated by the media.
6. Emergency response personnel may need guidance from the community, when working with those individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, totally and legally blind, who have cognitive, developmental, or physical disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency, who require special assistance.
7. Many community members requiring specialized services will have access to family member support or direct care from service providers; others will not have access to their normal resources.
8. Some members of the community may have evacuated without or have been separated from durable medical supplies and specialized equipment they need. (i.e. wheelchairs, walkers, telephones, etc.)

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Stearns County and the City of St. Cloud utilize the National Incident Management System (NIMS) when managing all disasters. The Emergency Operations Plan has been designed based on the NIMS model utilizing the Incident Command System. The Command Staff includes a Legal Officer, Public Information Officer, Liaison Officer, and Safety Officer. The General Staff includes the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance and Administration Section Chief. The Command and General Staff all report to the Emergency Operations Center Director. The Emergency Operations Center Director is the Stearns County/City of St. Cloud Emergency Management Director. In addition to the Command and General Staff positions there are Branch Directors and Unit Leaders that represent the 21 annexes of this emergency operations plan. Branch Directors and Unit Leaders report to Section Chiefs, as outlined in the flowchart below.

All of the boxes within this chart correspond with functions that support the Emergency Operations Center.

The shaded boxes represent Annexes of the Emergency Operations Plan.



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IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

Stearns County/City of St. Cloud Emergency Management Director

The Emergency Management Director is responsible for carrying out the emergency management program for Stearns County/City of St. Cloud. The Director will coordinate the activities of all organizations for emergency management within Stearns County/City of St. Cloud and with additional emergency management agencies/organizations throughout the county and state. The Emergency Management Director will assume responsibility as the Emergency Operations Center Director upon activation of the EOC and will establish response and recovery priorities through the EOC and will coordinate the resources needed to support the emergency operations.

Special Populations Unit Leader

The Special Populations Unit Leader will work with the planning section to address the needs of those residents of the County/City who are deaf and hard of hearing, totally and legally blind, those with physical, cognitive or developmental disabilities, persons with mental illness and those with limited English proficiency, who may require special assistance following an emergency/disaster. The Special Populations Unit Leader will provide guidance to ensure access to emergency response and recovery services for the vulnerable and hardest to reach populations.

Public Information Officer: Provide official information and instructions to the community utilizing all available means (including, but not limited to TV, radio, websites, closed captioning, large print materials, brail, etc) of communication, before, during and after an emergency or disaster situations.

Congregate Care: Develop organizational and operational policies and procedures required to meet the food, clothing and shelter needs of people on a mass care basis during natural, technological and national security hazards, to include those who are deaf and hard of hearing, totally or legally blind, who have cognitive, developmental, or physical disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency.

Transportation: When carrying out emergency transportation activities, immediate needs must be considered first, followed by continuing requirements. Immediate transportation needs normally involve the evacuation of people, including residents of special facilities and residents from impacted areas. Continuing transportation needs typically involve the movement of relief supplies, equipment and emergency workers during response and recovery efforts. Consideration needs to be given to transporting service animals along with their owners and to special resources needed to transport our special needs populations.

Public Health & Medical: Special populations may have unique medical needs. Consideration must be given to ensuring they have their durable medical supplies, prescriptions, medical attendants, and other specialized medical equipment and services.

Stearns County Human Services: Identify who our vulnerable and at risk individuals are so their needs can be addressed. Facilitate the disbursement of financial resources to special populations. Coordinate for the congregate care needs.

Additional Responsibilities and Support

1. Resources
Local resources are described in the Resource Manual.

2. Maintenance and Records/Contracts

The Stearns County/City of St. Cloud Emergency Operations Plan, including the Basic Plan and Annexes, is updated on an annual basis. Each annex representative is responsible for participating in the full review process every other year and for independently reviewing the annex on an annual basis. The overall responsibility for revising the Emergency Operations Plan is that of the Stearns County Emergency Management department.

Records will be maintained on the use of all equipment, whether owned, leased, rented or borrowed. These records/contracts will be used as a basis for possible recovery of emergency operations expenses from a responsible party or reimbursement of certain expenses by State or Federal government. All records/contracts generated by the Special Populations Unit Leader (and staff) should be retained, until the Finance and Administration Section Chief makes a final decision regarding claims for cost recovery or reimbursement.

3. Preservation of Records

All vital records produced or obtained by the Special Populations Unit Leader should be protected from the effects of disasters to the maximum extent feasible. Should records be damaged during an emergency situation, professional assistance in preserving and restoring those records should be obtained as soon as possible.

4. Training & Exercises

- a. Personnel who will staff the EOC shall receive appropriate training on the operation of the facility, which should be arranged by the Special Populations Unit Leader.
- b. Emergency exercises should periodically include a scenario that provides for the demonstration of coordination of resources and support for special populations.

5. External Support

- a. Summaries of inter-local agreements and agreements with other governmental entities, volunteer groups and businesses for resource support, as well as contingency contracts with commercial transportation providers are listed in the Resource Manual. Activation of such agreements and contracts will normally be coordinated through the EOC.

V. REFERENCES

Resource Manual

VI. AUTHENTICATION

Marvin Klug, Director
Stearns County Emergency Management

Date

VII. ATTACHMENTS (**All attachments have been removed**)

Job Description Attachment 1

Personnel Directory Attachment 2

Supporting Agencies Attachment 3