NCOEMS Emergency operations Plan (NCOEMS – EOP)
APPENDIX 7: Demobilization standard operating guideline
October 2023
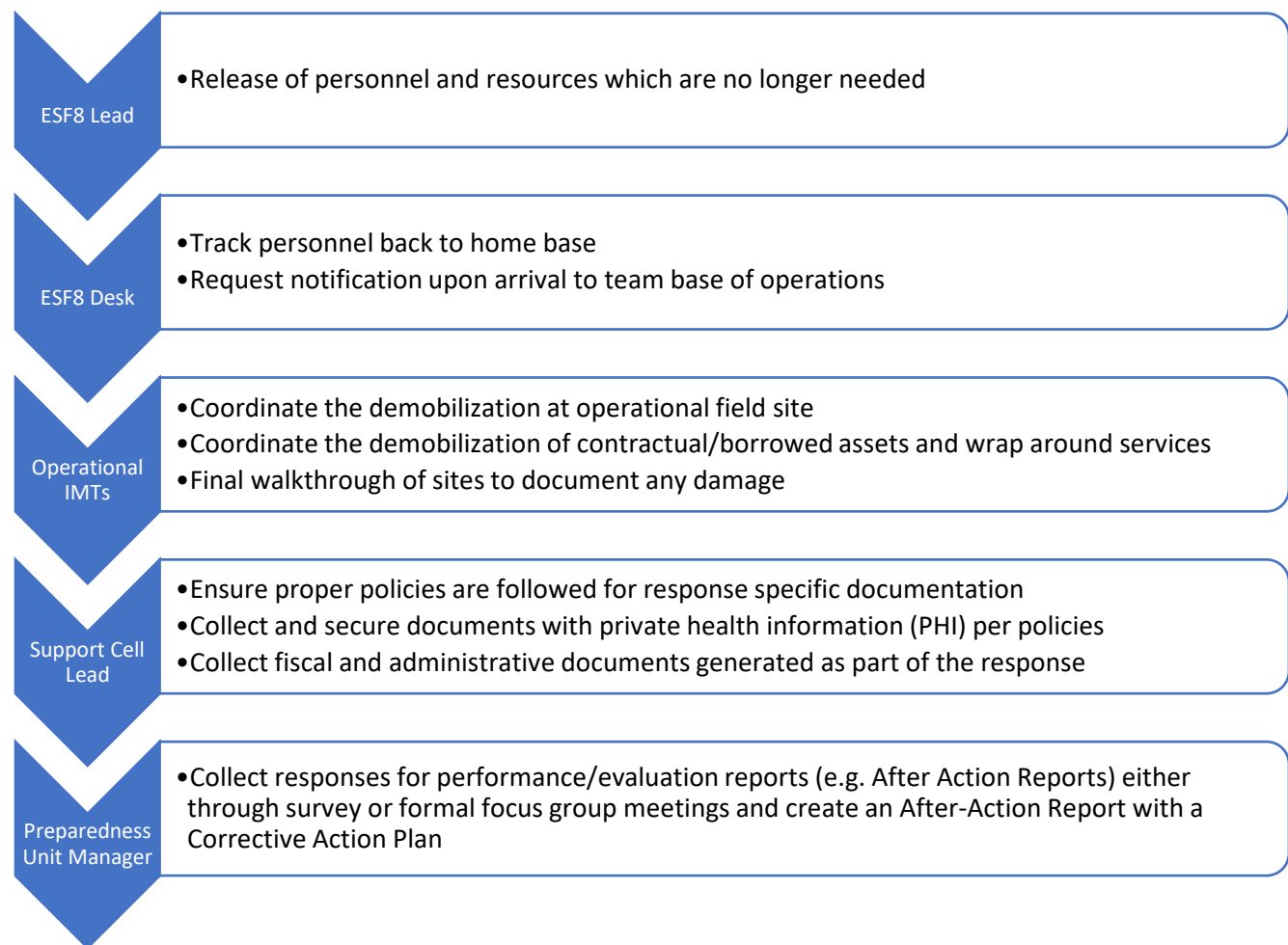
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Purpose

This document is meant to assist the ESF8 Lead and NCOEMS staff by providing a protocol for the smooth and efficient recovery from emergency operations back to normal daily operations. An efficient recovery is essential for ensuring that the transition back to regular operations is safe, controlled, and cost-effective.

Scope

This document provides guidance for the phased demobilization and recovery from emergency response operations in which North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services is the coordinating agency.

Concept of Operations

As response objectives are achieved and the emergency comes under control, the ESF8 Lead may direct the demobilization of various response elements. Much of this decision is driven by the release of resources from local partners and declining census in shelter locations. This process includes:

ESF8 Lead
- Release of personnel and resources which are no longer needed

ESF8 Desk
- Track personnel back to home base
- Request notification upon arrival to team base of operations

Operational IMTs
- Coordinate the demobilization at operational field site
- Coordinate the demobilization of contractual/borrowed assets and wrap around services
- Final walkthrough of sites to document any damage

Support Cell Lead
- Ensure proper policies are followed for response specific documentation
- Collect and secure documents with private health information (PHI) per policies
- Collect fiscal and administrative documents generated as part of the response

Preparedness Unit Manager
- Collect responses for performance/evaluation reports (e.g. After Action Reports) either through survey or formal focus group meetings and create an After-Action Report with a Corrective Action Plan

Release of Personnel and Resources

At the beginning of every new operational period the ESF8 Lead, along with the ESF8 Operations Manager and other appropriate ESF8 leadership, will make an assessment of the remaining response objectives and determine what response elements should be demobilized. Much of this decision is based on the release of resources from local partners, decline in support needed from ESF8 operational locations, or leadership decisions to scale back resources due to increased availability for local resources to be utilized. Discussions with local partners, operational incident management teams and North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) Emergency Services Group (ESG) should occur to determine anticipated resource need timeline as part of this decision-making process.

Communication to all parties involved with the resource (local partner, regional coordination center, incident management team, home agency etc.) should be engaged in the decision on the demobilization timeline to ensure no gap in operations and wrap around services occurs. Notes should be placed in the NCSPARTA WEBEOC resource request. Prior to demobilization of any resources ensure all mission assignment tasks and related documentation have been completed.

Tracking Personnel Back to Home Base

Upon release of personnel and resources, the ESF8 Desk should ensure that tracking occurs back to home base to ensure safe arrival and ongoing support until completion of the mission. Notes should be added to the NCSPARTA WEBEOC as applicable to update the status tracking. This includes contact when heading back to home base, midpoint check (if applicable) and safe arrival back. This can be accomplished via text, phone, radio etc.

Coordinate the Demobilization at Operational Field Sites

Each field operational site Incident Management Team (IMT) is responsible for ensuring that all assets and wrap around services in use at their sites are demobilized appropriately:

a. Make notes in the NCSPARTA WEBEOC resource request when an asset/wrap around service is able to be demobilized including the specific date and time agreed upon in the demobilization timeline.
b. Coordinate directly by phone or email for the release and return of contractual or borrowed assets and wrap around services. This may include physical pickup of assets (e.g., shower trailer) or notification that service can be stopped (e.g., waste management).
    i. If the asset is owned by a SERT partner (e.g., HCC, NCDPH etc.) contact them directly to coordinate pickup or return.
    ii. Majority of contractual items that need to be demobilized should be coordinated with NCEM Logistics
    iii. If NCOEMS owned asset, coordinate directly with ESF8 Operations Manager
c. Once all assets have been released/returned a final walk through of the operational site should occur and any potential damage that is noted should be documented, pictures taken and sent to the NCOEMS Support Cell.

Follow Policies for Response Specific Documentation

During the activation, response specific documentation will be generated at field operational sites, the SEOC ESF8 desk, and the NCOEMS Support Cell. The NCOEMS Support Cell is responsible for ensuring that all documents that are generated are properly collected and managed as outlined below:

    a. Collect and secure documents with private health information (PHI) according to NC DHHS policies and manuals: https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/departmental/policies-manuals/section-viii-privacy-and-security

    b. Ensure completion of and collection of fiscal and administrative documents generated as part of the response. These documents should be placed in response specific folder on OwnCloud. These documents include expenditure reports, medical support shelter records, patient movement records, incident reports, activity logs, and rosters.

    c. Collect any documentation and pictures from operational field site demobilization walk throughs and place them in a separate file name by operational site on OwnCloud.

After-Action Report

Information for an After-Action Report (AAR) should be collected throughout a response while the incident actions are still fresh in responder's minds. This information is critical to improving future response performance and enhancing the morale of responders and their teammates. A ReadyOp form should be created for each new incident and a link to provide the feedback shared at the beginning of an incident, throughout an incident and at the end of an incident.

Main purpose is to capture:
1. What went well?
2. What needs improvement or noted response gaps?
3. What lessons were learned?

The following framework is suggested for the After-Action Report:
1. Report
    a. Accumulation of all incident documentation.
2. Discussion or Survey collection of information that needs to be included for the AAR.
    a. Significant events and actions taken.
3. Analysis
    a. In-depth examination of successes and deficiencies: planning, operational, and organizational.
4. Follow-up
    a. Present recommendations to correct the identified deficiencies.
    b. Designation of required actions and responsible parties.

NCOEMS will complete an AAR within ninety days of incident closeout along with a corrective action plan. The completed report will be distributed to all NCOEMS staff, Healthcare Coalition staff, stakeholders, partners, and grantees. The report should be used to help prioritize future plans, training, exercises, grant purchases and strategic planning.