



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

NUMBER FORTY-ONE (2019)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESPONSIBILITIES OF STATE AGENCIES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Importance of the Issue

Sections 44-146.13 to 44-146.28:1 of the *Code of Virginia* authorize the development and maintenance of the Commonwealth of Virginia's emergency management program and organization and defines the emergency powers, authorities, and responsibilities of the governor. Emergency preparedness is a core responsibility of all executive branch agencies and public institutions of higher education (State Agencies). Therefore, I direct that all State Agencies implement the emergency management initiatives prescribed in this Order to enhance emergency preparedness in our Commonwealth, focusing on continuity of government, continuity of operations, and the operational capability to fulfill their roles in the event of a disaster.

This Order describes the overarching strategic preparedness initiatives for State Agencies. Specific operational responsibilities of State Agencies to respond to emergencies in the Commonwealth are outlined in the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP), adopted and implemented by Executive Order 42 (2019). The COVEOP also delegates to certain State Agencies and members of the governor's cabinet special powers and authorities, including the authority to grant waivers to regulations and routine processes. Executive Order No. 2 (2018) sets forth the procedural authorities for declaring a state of emergency.

Preparedness is a Core Responsibility of Every State Agency

With protecting the citizens of the Commonwealth as a primary duty, and by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article 5, §§ 1 and 7 of the Constitution of Virginia and by § 44-146.17 of the *Code of Virginia*, as governor and Director of Emergency Management, I direct each State Agency to include emergency preparedness planning, training, and exercises as basic responsibilities. Additionally, each State Agency shall include emergency preparedness in its strategic planning and performance management process. All State Agencies shall support cabinet-level continuity of government efforts, develop and maintain a continuity of operations

plan, use all resources and capabilities to support statewide response and recovery efforts and provide emergency public information resources. Furthermore, I encourage legislative, judicial, and independent State Agencies to develop and maintain a continuity of operations plan in order to ensure the continued provision of essential state governmental services to citizens during an emergency.

Ensure State-Level Readiness

Catastrophic disaster response and recovery requires the whole of state government. As such, all cabinet-level offices and State Agencies, including those not designated in the COVEOP, shall be prepared to support disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts upon direction of the governor or his designee.

In order to be prepared for potential emergency situations, I order the following:

A. Cabinet Responsibilities

Each member of the governor's cabinet shall be responsible for conducting an annual review of the disaster preparedness, response, and recovery roles assigned to his or her office and State Agencies to ensure that they have adequate plans, federally-compliant emergency procurement contracts, staff, and resources to fulfill their responsibilities as assigned in the COVEOP.

B. Agency-Designated Virginia Emergency Support Team (VEST) Liaison Officer

The VEST is the interagency coordinating group that operates the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) to carry out emergency response and recovery activities. In order to fulfill the mission of the Commonwealth's emergency management program, it is essential that all State Agencies have adequate representation on the VEST. Therefore, each executive branch agency shall appoint a VEST Liaison Officer and at least one alternate to serve as the primary point of contact for all disaster preparedness, response and recovery matters. VEST Liaison Officers shall have subject matter expertise to staff relevant Emergency Support Functions, the authority to dedicate resources, and the ability to fulfill other assignments upon activation of the VEST. VEST Liaison Officers shall also participate in monthly exercises in the VEOC and follow a training program as determined by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM). The primary and alternate VEST Liaison Officers shall have direct access to the head of his or her agency.

The VEST Liaison Officers shall be responsible for the following duties:

1. Familiarity with the COVEOP available on the VDEM website;
2. Preparation and maintenance of the portions of the COVEOP for which they are responsible. Lead agencies are responsible for coordinating revisions to their respective portions of the COVEOP and complying with the content and submission requirements established by VDEM;

3. Pursuant to § 2.2-222.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, preparation and maintenance of a written internal agency plan to fulfill the responsibilities designated in the COVEOP. Plans shall be compliant with VDEM's template and submitted to VDEM annually by May 1;
4. Maintenance of a current roster of personnel with appropriate skill-sets designated to staff Emergency Support Functions or other VEST assignments during disaster operations;
5. The staffing and/or coordination of personnel to support 13-hour shifts in the VEOC, Disaster Recovery Center, and/or Joint Field Office during disasters or other emergencies as directed by VDEM;
6. Coordination of disaster-related information through standard VEST processes;
7. To serve as the agency point-of-contact for disaster-related waivers or exemptions for registration, licensing, or permitting requirements;
8. Oversight of the agency's collection of disaster-related costs and its submission of cost reports to the Finance and Administration Section of the VEST;
9. Identification and coordination of appropriate agency personnel to participate in VEST exercises and training events as authorized by the agency head in order to increase awareness of the role of personnel during disasters or emergencies;
10. The State Agency's compliance with the National Incident Management System; and
11. Completion of emergency management course requirements as determined by VDEM and participation in monthly VEST training and exercises.

C. State Agency Emergency Management Coordinator

Each State Agency shall appoint an Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) and at least one alternate. Under the guidance of the EMC, each State Agency shall develop and maintain plans that outline the actions to be undertaken by building occupants during emergency situations, severe weather scenarios, and all related preparedness drills. The State Agency primary and alternate EMCs shall have direct access to the head of the facility, the head of the agency, or president of the public institutions of higher education during declared states of emergency.

EMCs shall be responsible for the following duties:

1. Development, adoption, and maintenance of a current written Occupant Emergency Action Plan with respect to executive branch agencies, consisting

of building evacuation, shelter-in-place, active threat, and other hazards or emergencies as deemed appropriate;

2. Coordination of the Occupant Emergency Action Plan with the appropriate local emergency management agency; and
3. Development, adoption, and maintenance of a written Crisis and Emergency Management Plan with respect to public institutions of higher education, and compliance with all related requirements in § 23.1-804 of the *Code of Virginia*.

EMCs shall also be responsible for the following duties related to continuity of operations planning:

1. The annual creation and update of the State Agency's continuity of operations plan to conform to the most recent template produced by VDEM;
2. The conduct of continuity awareness briefings (or other means of orientation) for all newly-hired personnel (including host or contract personnel) on the State Agency's continuity of operations plan within 90 days of hire or appointment;
3. The conduct of an annual continuity awareness briefing for agency leadership. The continuity awareness briefing must include, at a minimum, individual continuity plan duties, mission essential functions, and orders of succession;
4. The maintenance of a current roster of State Agency personnel required to implement the continuity of operations plan;
5. The conduct of an annual test or exercise of the continuity of operations plan that includes alert, notification, and activation procedures for key personnel;
6. The completion of an After Action Report within three months of a continuity of operations plan test, exercise, or actual event, and monitor the correction of identified deficiencies. These deficiencies shall also be corrected in a reasonable time frame as resources allow; and
7. The annual submission of a list of continuity of operations plan alternate facilities to the Department of General Services by July 1.

D. State Agency Participation in the Joint Information Center during Emergencies
Providing a consistent message to citizens and the public during a disaster is of critical importance. Therefore, I direct that all members of the governor's cabinet and State Agencies coordinate emergency public information with VDEM during states of emergency. I also direct that executive branch agencies appoint a public information officer to staff the VEST Joint Information Center at the request of VDEM. All State

Agency public information officers shall complete a training course in emergency public communications as directed by VDEM.

E. State Workforce Preparedness and Disaster Support

In order to promote a culture of preparedness within the Commonwealth, I direct that all personnel and faculty of State Agencies shall successfully complete Emergency Management for State Employees training annually. This course will be offered online through the Commonwealth of Virginia Learning Center website and will be available after January 1, 2020.

Members of my cabinet, executive branch agency heads, and other key personnel, including any state employee, are subject to having leave cancelled during preparedness activities for a declaration of state of emergency.

The state employee workforce is essential to the Commonwealth's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters. Therefore, all State Agencies shall include the standard emergency preparedness and assistance statement found on the Department of Human Resource Management web site in state Employee Work Profiles. This statement shall serve as notice to employees that they may be required to perform other emergency management duties, including supporting and staffing the VEST during a disaster. Department of Human Resource Management in coordination with VDEM, shall identify a method to leverage effectively the state employee workforce in anticipation of disaster response and recovery operations.

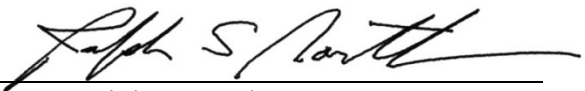
Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order rescinds and replaces Executive Order No. 41 (2011) issued by Governor Robert F. McDonnell.

This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

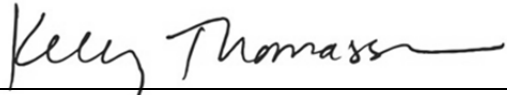
Given under my hand and the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 3rd day of September, 2019.





Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:



Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth