



World Health
Organization

#Ready4Response

Tier 2: Ready4Response

Module 1: Response systems and structures

Introduction to systems and structures

Unit 1A

Photo: WHO / C. Black

#Ready₄Response



Hi. I'm your facilitator –
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INTRODUCTION

At a national or organizational level, emergency management is guided by structures, systems, policies, plans and procedures. Understanding how to work within these is key to effective response.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define emergency management;
- describe the main policies, plans and procedures required in response;
- define the Incident Management System;
- define an Emergency Operations Centre; and
- explain what is meant by the Cluster system.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



is the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with all elements of emergencies. It involves the establishment of plans and structures to help government and other responders coordinate the response.



3 key elements combine to manage emergencies:

- Policies, plans and procedures
- An Incident Management System
- Emergency Operations Centres.

In a humanitarian response, the Cluster system may also be working alongside the national response.

The different response policies, plans, procedures and structures interlink:

Policies, plans and procedures: provide a mandate for response organizations and guidance on how organizations work together to manage the response.



The Incident Management System: provides a management structure bringing together different elements of the response to work together.



Emergency Operations Centres: at strategic, operational and tactical level, provide a location for responders to work together.



Cluster system (where operating): brings together humanitarian response actors to coordinate the response.

Policies, plans and procedures are reference documents that provide guidance to respond to specific threats. They:

- give responders the authority to carry out their tasks;
- provide a mandate for responders so that response mechanisms can be established and funded;
- describe and explain the roles and responsibilities of the responding organizations as part of the national response;
- establish and explain the coordination mechanisms that will allow responders to work together effectively; and
- provide high-level guidance on the manner in which the response should be conducted.

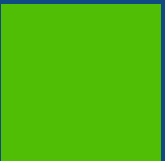


2-MINUTE REFLECTION

The policies, plans, procedures and structures discussed in this unit are designed to shape emergency management.



Think about the emergency response arrangements in your country and organization – how have you used them in the past to help guide you in your work?



The Incident Management System (IMS)

is an emergency management structure to coordinate different teams working in the response.

It is based on the key functions that must be carried out as part of a successful response. These are:

- Management
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance and Administration.

We will examine the IMS in detail in the following units.



Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs)

are a key part of public health emergency preparedness and response programmes. They are sometimes called command posts, emergency coordination centres or operations centres.



Bringing teams with different skills and expertise together to a physical location like an EOC makes it easier for them to work and plan together to:



Support public
health response
needs



Receive, analyze,
display and
monitor incident
information



Identify, organize,
deploy and track
resources



Communicate,
collaborate and
coordinate from
a centralized
location

The Cluster system

provides a coordination mechanism to support and complement national response.

It brings together groups of humanitarian organizations, UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action to respond to humanitarian emergencies and provide clear leadership and accountability to the response.

While the Cluster system does not fall within the remit of this course, there is a training package on health cluster coordination available on OpenWHO:
<https://openwho.org/courses/health-cluster>





SUMMARY

The response is built on:

- policies, plans and procedures to give response organizations a mandate to act, and define their roles and responsibilities and how the response will be coordinated;
- the IMS to provide a structure in which organizations can operate;
- EOCs to provide a physical location to coordinate the response; and
- the Cluster system which can support the national response by coordinating humanitarian agencies.

“
**Take some time to
look up the emergency
arrangements that
cover your area of
work in the response.**
”



FOLLOW-UP TASK

1. Consider the structures in place and how you and your organization fit into them.
2. Make a list of the elements you are unsure of and research them.