

Legal Authorities of the Veterans Health Administration Emergency Management Program

June, 2000

Education & Research
EMSHG

Veterans Health Administration
Emergency Management Program

Table of Contents

Internal Directives and Handbooks

VA Directive 0320, <u>Emergency Preparedness Planning</u>	3
VHA Directive 0320, <u>Emergency Medical Preparedness</u>	3
VHA Directive 97-046, <u>Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System</u>	3
VHA Handbook 0320.1, <u>VA/DoD Contingency Hospital System</u>	3
VHA Handbook 0320.2, <u>Emergency Management Program Procedures</u>	4

External Legal Mandates

P.L. 97-174, <u>Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense (VA/DoD) Health Resource Sharing and Emergency Operations Act</u>	4
NSDD 47, <u>Emergency Mobilization Preparedness</u>	5
E.O. 12656, <u>Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities</u>	5
Federal Register, Part II, <u>Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan: Notice (for E.O. 12657, FEMA Assistance in Emergency Preparedness Planning of Commercial Nuclear Power Plants)</u>	7
<u>Federal Response Plan</u> (for P.L. 100-707, Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act)	7
PDD 39, <u>U.S. Policy on Counter-terrorism</u>	9
PDD 62, <u>Combating Terrorism</u>	10
PDD 63, <u>Protection of Critical Infrastructure</u>	10

Internal Agency Directives and Handbooks

VA Directive 0320, Emergency Preparedness Planning

{Note: the following was taken from the Transmittal Sheet.}

“1. Reason for Issue. To assign Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning responsibilities to all levels of Department management and provide a central point of coordination for these activities within the Department and with other Departments and agencies.

2. Summary of Contents/Major Changes. This directive addresses all emergency preparedness policies regarding readiness, response, recovery, and mitigation, including policies regarding the continuation or rapid restoration of the Department’s vital functions under all hazards conditions. These hazard conditions range from accidents, fires, natural or technological disasters, and civil disorder to military or terrorist attack. ...”

{No link, full paper copy available upon request.}

VHA Directive 0320, Emergency Medical Preparedness (1997)

<http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/health/direct/0320.htm>

VHA Directive 97-046, Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System (1997)

<http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/health/direct/197046.htm>

VHA Handbook 0320.1, VA/DoD Contingency Hospital System

{Note: the following was taken from the Transmittal Sheet.}

“1. Reason for Issue. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook supplements VHA Directive 0320 (to be issued) and provides for a

- comprehensive description of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) activation of the VA and Department of Defense (VA~DoD) Contingency Hospital System and implementation of the VA~DoD Contingency Hospital System plan.
2. Summary of Major Changes. This Handbook identifies VA~DoD Contingency Hospital System responsibilities and concepts of operation which reflect the reorganized VHA Headquarters and field structures. NOTE: The existing plans were developed during Operation Desert Storm; this handbook streamlines and updates those plans in keeping with the new VHA organization. ...”

{No link, full paper copy available upon request.}

VHA Handbook 0320.2, Emergency Management Program Procedures (2000)

<http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/health/handbook/0320-2hk.htm>

External Legal Mandates

P.L. 97-174, Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense (VA/DoD) Health Resource Sharing and Emergency Operations Act (1982)

“Sec. 4 (a) Chapter 31 of Title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 5011 the following new section,”5011A. Furnishing of health-care services to members of the Armed Forces during war or national emergency .

(a) (1) During and immediately following a period of war, or a period of national emergency declared by the President or the Congress that involves the use of the Armed Forces in armed conflict, the Administrator may furnish hospital care, nursing home care and medical care to members of the Armed Forces on active duty. ...“

NSDD 47, Emergency Mobilization Preparedness (1982)

{Note: NSDD 47 is included here as it caused the creation of the National Disaster Medical System, from the then existing Civilian~Military Contingency Hospital System (CMCHS), among other things.}

“Health: It is the policy of the United States to develop systems and plans to ensure that sufficient medical personnel, supplies, equipment, and facilities will be available and deployed to meet essential civilian and military health care needs in an emergency.

The program will:

- Enhance the Nation’s ability to recover from major emergencies and protect the population from the spread of disease;
- Supplement medical resources provided by State and local governments and the private sector with medical resources during a domestic emergency;
- Provide medical care to military casualties in civilian and federal facilities; and
- Allocate scarce supplies and skilled professionals (specialists) to the highest priority needs. ...”

For full reference, go to:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/html/historical/index.html>

E.O. 12656, Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities (1988)

“Part 1: Preamble

Section 101: National Security Emergency Preparedness Policy

- (a) The policy of the United States is to have sufficient capabilities at all levels of government to meet essential defense and civilian needs during any national security emergency. A national security emergency is any occurrence, including natural disaster, military attack, technological emergency, or other emergency that seriously threatens the national security of the United States. ...
- (b) Effective national security emergency preparedness planning requires identification of functions that would have to be performed during such an

emergency; development of plans for performing these functions; and, development of the capability to execute those plans.

Section 102: Purpose

- (a) The purpose of this Order is to assign national security emergency preparedness responsibilities to Federal departments and agencies. These assignments are based, whenever possible, on extensions of the regular missions of the departments and agencies. ...

Part 27: Veterans Administration

Sec 2701. Lead Responsibilities. In addition to the applicable responsibilities covered in Parts 1 and 2, the Administrator of the Veterans Affairs shall:

- (1) Develop plans for provision of emergency health services to veteran beneficiaries in Veterans Administration medical facilities, to active duty military personnel and as resources permit, to civilians in communities affected by national security emergencies;
- (2) Develop plans for mortuary services for eligible veterans, and advise on methods for the internment of the dead during national security emergencies;

Sec 2702. Support Responsibilities. The Administrator of Veterans Affairs shall:

- (1) Assist the Secretary of Health and Human Services in promoting the development of State and local plans for the provision of medical services in national security emergencies, and develop appropriate plans to support such State and local plans;
- (2) Assist the Secretary of Health and Human Services in developing national plans to mobilize the health care industry and medical resources during national security emergencies;
- (3) Assist the Secretary of Health and Human Services in developing national plans to set priorities and allocate medical resources among civilian and military claimants.”

Federal Register, Part II, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan: Notice, Tuesday, November 6, 1994 (for E.O. 12657, FEMA Assistance in Emergency Preparedness Planning of Commercial Nuclear Power Plants (1980)

- (9) The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- (a) Provide medical assistance using Medical Emergency Radiological Response Teams (MERRTs) .
 - (b) Provide temporary housing.

Federal Response Plan (1999) (for P.L. 100-707, Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (1992)

{Note: VA supports four of the twelve Emergency Support Functions (ESFs)}:

“ESF #3: Public Works and Engineering provides technical advice and evaluation, engineering services, contracting for construction management and inspection, contracting for the emergency repair of water and wastewater treatment facilities, potable water and ice, emergency power, and real estate support to assist the State(s) in meeting goals related to lifesaving and life-sustaining actions, damage mitigation and recovery activities following a major disaster or emergency. ...

The Department of Veterans Affairs will provide engineering personnel and support, including design estimating and construction supervision for repair, reconstruction and restoration of eligible facilities.

ESF #6: Mass Care coordinates Federal assistance in support of State and local efforts to meet the mass care needs of victims of a disaster. The Federal assistance will support the delivery of mass care services of shelter, feeding and emergency first aid to disaster victims; the establishment of systems to provide bulk distribution of emergency relief supplies to disaster victims; and the collection of information to operate a Disaster Welfare Information (DWI) system for the purpose of reporting victim status and assisting in Family reunification.

The Department of Veterans Affairs will:

- a. Provide for food preparation and stockpiling in its facilities during the immediate emergency;
- b. Provide medical supplies and personnel to support mass care operations, and
- c. Provide available facilities suitable for mass shelter.

ESF #7: Resources Support. ESF #7 supports federal organizations during the immediate response phase of a disaster including, emergency relief supplies, space, office equipment, office supplies, telecommunications (in coordination with ESF #2), contracting services, transportation services (in coordination with ESF #1), security services, Federal law enforcement liaison, and personnel required to support immediate response activities. ESF #7 provides support for requirements not specifically identified in other ESFs.

The Department of Veterans Affairs will:

- a. Provide technical assistance in identifying and procuring medical supplies and other medical services.
- b. Provide personnel knowledgeable in Federal procurement and distribution operations; and
- c. Provide computer support operations, as appropriate.

ESF #8 – Health and Medical Services provides coordinated Federal assistance to supplement State and local resources in response to public health and medical care needs following a major disaster or emergency, or during a developing medical situation. ... This support is categorized in the following functional areas:

- a. Assessment of health/medical needs;
- b. Health surveillance;
- c. Medical care personnel;
- d. Health/medical equipment and supplies;
- e. Patient evacuation;
- f. In-hospital care;
- g. Food/drug/medical device safety;
- h. Worker health/safety;
- i. Radiological/chemical/biological hazards consultation;
- j. Mental health care;
- k. Public health information;
- l. Vector control;
- m. Potable water/wastewater and solid waste disposal;
- n. Victim identification/mortuary services; and
- o. Veterinary services.

The Department of Veterans Affairs will:

- a. Alert VA National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Federal Coordinating Center (FCC) officials to activate NDMS area operations/patient reception plans, initiate bed status reporting based upon Global Patient Movement Requirements Center (GPMRC) instructions, and coordinate patient reception, management, and the provision of inpatient care through the NDMS hospitals in areas where VA Medical Centers serve as local NDMS FCCs.
- b. Assist in providing medical support to State and local governments within the disaster area. Such services may include triage, medical treatment, and the utilization of surviving VA Medical Centers within the disaster area.
- c. Provide available medical supplies for distribution to mass care centers and medical care locations being operated for disaster victims; and
- d. Provide assistance in managing human remains, including victim identification and disposition.”

For a complete copy of the Federal Response Plan, go to:

<http://www.fema.gov/r-n-r/frp/>

PDD 39, U.S. Counter-terrorism Policy (1995)

{The following from an unclassified FEMA abstract.}

“1. General. Terrorism is both a threat to our national security as well as a criminal act. The Administration has stated that it is the policy of the United States to use all appropriate means to deter, defeat and respond to all terrorist attacks on our territory and resources, both people and facilities, wherever they occur. ...

2. Measures to Combat Terrorism. To ensure the United States is prepared to combat terrorists in all its forms, a number of measures have been directed. These include reducing vulnerabilities to terrorism, deterring and responding to terrorist acts, and having capabilities to prevent and manage the consequences of terrorist of nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons, including those of mass destruction. ...”

PDD 62, Combating Terrorism (1999)

{Note: While PDD 62 is classified, one of its unclassified assignments tasks VA to assist Health and Human Services in the training of civilian hospitals that participate in the National Disaster Medical System for weapons of mass destruction.}

PDD 63, Protection of Critical Infrastructure (1999)

{Note: While PDD 63 is classified, its intent is based upon a commission's report on ways to limit cyber-terrorism attacks on essential systems and infrastructure, thereby underscoring the importance of Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning.}

(For the White House Fact Sheets):

<http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/uri-res/12R?urn:pdi://oma.eop.gov.us/1998/5/22/6.text.1>