

The New APHIS Emergency Operations Center

The new Emergency Operations Center (AEOC) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is a state-of-the-art facility that will significantly improve APHIS' capability to coordinate responses to animal and plant health emergencies. The AEOC serves as the national command and coordination center for APHIS emergency programs disaster management. The AEOC gives the National Incident Commander direct access to incident sites through a variety of technologically advanced communications procedures. Teams working in the AEOC, called the National Response Management Team (NRMT), now have a greatly enhanced ability to collect, analyze, and disseminate information, enabling them to meet any animal or plant health emergency with a well-orchestrated and technologically advanced emergency response. The NRMT can direct necessary resources and communicate with appropriate stakeholders by coordinating with other Federal, State, and international organizations, including the Department of Homeland Security.

AEOC Functions

The AEOC can be used in both routine and emergency situations. When an emergency operation is not underway, the AEOC facilities will be used to monitor and report on international and domestic surveillance of pest pathogens and disease conditions of concern and to conduct advanced training. During an emergency, the AEOC can support 40 or more personnel and operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The AEOC will be used through all phases of an emergency, from initial situation assessment through response coordination and support and then to wrap-up phases. The AEOC features advanced technology that allows AEOC team members to communicate with field personnel and USDA leadership. Communications capabilities include video teleconferencing, advanced computer interfaces, geographical information system mapping, and a strong multimedia component.

Floor Plan

The spatial layout of the AEOC provides both large gathering areas and private workspaces. The Center for Intelligence Collection is a large, open space that includes the projection area and 21 emergency operation stations. The Leadership Incident Coordination Center is used for assembling and briefing key leadership. Another room is dedicated to receiving and storing classified information. A briefing room, with seating for 25 to 30 people, can be used to assemble stakeholder groups. It can also serve as a training classroom. There are also conference rooms and a number of individual offices.

Emergency Response Enhancement

AEOC team members are trained in incident command system procedures of emergency management and now have an enhanced ability to keep leadership informed of the status of emergencies. Having this world-class facility to coordinate and support emergency response helps APHIS to provide leadership during national emergencies and greatly enhances our ability to work with partners.

Additional Information

For further information, you may contact the AEOC at (800) 601-9327 or (301) 436-3101. You may send e-mail to emoc@usda.gov.

Fast Facts

The AEOC project started in September 1999.

Facility Characteristics

The Size of the AEOC is 8,800 square feet. The AEOC is supported by a 400 kilowatt generator as an emergency power source.

The AEOC features four 65-inch rear projection screens, 40 high resolution computers, and global positioning system time-zone clock displays.

Cost Data

The AEOC was designed at a cost of \$87,321. Construction cost was \$587,626. The advanced electronics systems cost \$2.6 million.

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