



Why This Matters

Fusion Centers and Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) serve distinct but complementary roles in supporting the country's homeland security efforts. In many situations, a Fusion Center or EOC may have information that the other would benefit from having. For example, if a Fusion Center receives information regarding a threat to an event that could cause mass casualties, the EOC and other emergency responders could use that information to be better prepared to respond. Information received at an EOC that seems inconsequential could be part of a larger pattern, which may be recognized only if that information is sent to a Fusion Center for analysis.

DHS Response

The DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis concurred with seven recommendations. FEMA concurred with all recommendations addressed to them. The sole recommendation the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis did not concur with was in regard to further disseminating CPG-502 and ensuring its applicability to local EOCs. The DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis stated that this recommendation was better directed towards FEMA; however, officials said they would support FEMA's efforts to comply with the recommendation.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov

Relationships Between Fusion Centers and Emergency Operations Centers

What We Determined

Fusion Center and Emergency Management efforts are enhanced with increased interaction and information sharing. Yet, some Fusion Centers are all-crimes oriented and do not consider EOCs as partners in their operations. Many EOC officials view Fusion Centers as solely law enforcement entities and either do not see a need or do not know how to effectively coordinate with them. These officials would benefit from building stronger relationships with each other.

Officials at Fusion Centers and EOCs we visited were not always aware of each other's roles, capabilities, and information needs. In some areas, these officials had limited or no interaction, which could hinder response to a natural or man-made disaster. Fusion Centers and EOC officials were not always aware of and did not always utilize federal guidance developed to address coordination and information sharing efforts. Officials at more than 83% of the locations we visited were either unaware of or did not utilize federal guidance for Fusion Center and EOC interaction provided in Comprehensive Preparedness Guide-502 (CPG-502).

Finally, the classification of information impedes effective information sharing between Fusion Center and EOC officials. Classification challenges exist at the federal level and with state law enforcement agency practices.

What We Recommend

We made eight recommendations that, when implemented, should improve Fusion Centers and Emergency Operations Centers interaction and information sharing efforts, including:

- Promoting the benefits of the all-hazards approach to Fusion Centers and EOCs by developing and sharing best practices.
- Providing technical assistance to Fusion Center officials to (1) ensure written procedures are in place for sharing information with EOCs and (2) conduct stand-alone periodic surveys to more effectively assess the usefulness and quality of the products and information that is provided to their partners, including EOC officials.
- Ensuring that CPG-502 and other federal guidance regarding coordination and information sharing efforts between Fusion Centers and EOCs is disseminated to all state, local, and tribal EOCs; promoting the benefits of using CPG-502; and ensuring that it is applicable to local EOCs.
- Providing training for Fusion Center staff on how to handle portion-marked products and redact law enforcement sensitive information from products generated at the state and local levels.