

Cal State LA Guide to SEMS

Overview

The University utilizes the functions and principles of SEMS (Standardized Emergency Management System) as described by government code 8607(a). SEMS incorporates the use of the Incident Command System regardless of the size of the incident or the number of agencies involved in the response, all incidents require a coordinated effort to ensure an effective response. The SEMS/ICS concept was created to ensure this occurs.

Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)

SEMS is the system required by Government Code §8607 (a) for managing response to multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction emergencies in California. SEMS provides for a multiple level emergency response organization and is intended to structure and facilitate the flow of emergency information and resources within and between the organizational levels. The SEMS system was created in response to the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire.

There are five organizational/ response levels in SEMS:

1. **Field Response:** The field response level is where emergency response personnel and resources, under the command of an appropriate authority, carry out tactical decisions and activations in direct response to an incident or threat. This is the incident level- where the emergency response begins. SEMS regulations require the use of ICS at this level of an incident.
2. **Local Government Level:** Local governments include cities, counties, and special districts. Local governments manage and coordinate the overall emergency response and recovery activities between emergency agencies within their jurisdiction. This is the first coordination level above the Field Response. Local governments are required to use SEMS when their emergency operations center is activated or a local emergency is declared.
3. **Operational Area:** The Operational Area manages and/or coordinates information, resources, and priorities among local governments and serves as the link between the local government level and the regional level. At this level, the governing bodies are required in SEMS to reach consensus on how resources will be allocated in a major crisis affecting multiple jurisdictions or agencies. All member jurisdictions and agencies have equal influence in establishing priorities and formulating decisions.
4. **Regional:** Because of its size and geography, the state has been divided into six mutual aid regions, all with operating Emergency Operations Centers (EOC's). The Regions EOC's prioritize requests and provide support to the Operational Areas in their Regions. This is to provide for more effective application and coordination of mutual aid and other related activities.
5. **State:** The state level is located in Sacramento at the Office of Emergency Services (OES) headquarters. OES manages state resources in response to the emergency

needs of the other levels. The state also serves as the coordination and communication link between the state and the federal disaster response system.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The EOC is a fixed location that is activated in an emergency from which the overall command, control, communications, and coordination are conducted so that an organization may continue operations during a disaster. Personnel responding to the EOC will be organized into an Incident Command System (ICS) structure.

Incident Command System (ICS)

ICS is a standardized organizational structure used to command, control, and coordinate the use of resources and personnel that have responded to the scene of an emergency. ICS is a component of SEMS.

The Incident Commander and Staff

Figure 1 — Incident Command System Structure



The **Incident Commander (IC)** is responsible for incident activities including the development and implementation of strategic decisions and for approving the ordering and releasing of resources. The Incident Commander, regardless of rank or position in the organization, has complete authority and responsibility for conducting the overall operation.

Safety Officer - Has the authority of the Incident Commander, and is charged with operational safety. This position is also the point of contact for coordinating post traumatic stress disorder/critical incident stress management (PTSD/CISM) services.

Information - Media contacts and reference/ phone contact. One of the most critical functions.

Liaison - The locator of all the agency representatives we may need for this incident. Also has to keep all of the other agencies nearby informed as to the progress of the incident.

The Four Major Division Assignments:

Operations: The teams in the field handling the incident.

Planning: The group used to gather all intelligence on the scope of the occurrence and the people/things involved. They are also responsible for immediate and future planning for the on-going incident and letting logistics know about those needs and the timeline.

Logistics: The group charged with obtaining all of the items that will be needed -- chain link fence, rent-a-cars, generators, toilets, food, etc. This includes the people needed for the operation. Logistics is in charge of both pre-staging and staging areas, and is charged with signing in all of the officers used in the operation, along with all volunteers and any volunteer items we are given.

Finance/Administration: Finance - To pay for all of the items purchased, rented, or leased during the incident, and to account for all timekeeping and payroll issues.

Administration - Accounts for all of the paperwork - becomes the collection point for workers compensation documentation, city/county liability forms, crime and incident reports, etc. Accumulates all of the section and division logs, and writes the after action report for the incident.

To complete training in the SEMS/ICS system, [visit the FEMA website here](#).

All State of California employees are considered “disaster service workers” and may be called on to provide assistance if a disaster occurs. Since the SEMS/ICS system will be used by first responders to coordinate the incident, it is crucial you understand the terminology and procedures.