

## Cabinet and Governor Appointed Agencies’ Performance Audit Action Item(s) & Status

# Opportunities to Improve Washington’s Preparedness Efforts in Emergency Management

*(See also [cabinet agency response](#) for full context to Washington State Auditor’s Office (SAO) [report](#), May, 2019)*

The Military Department (MIL) was included in this performance audit.

SAO Recommendations summary (Rec):

1. Provide guidance and training to local jurisdictions to more clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the EMD liaison, including how the liaison will work with local authorities in charge of an incident
2. Assist IMTs by coordinating regional training sessions with local partners to educate them on the role of the IMTs. EMD should also:
  - a) Work with IMTs to ensure the training materials they develop are consistent across the state
  - b) Send an EMD representative to each regional training session to answer questions about state operations
  - c) Redirect existing resources or request additional resources as needed
3. Continue to work with local jurisdictions to identify and resolve WebEOC software issues.
4. Identify opportunities for EMD and local jurisdictions to use WebEOC more frequently as a way to increase familiarity with the system, such as conducting practice exercises.
5. Develop and operate a statewide credentialing program to standardize requirements, identify and validate the expertise of incident management teams and emergency operations center personnel across the state
6. Work with local jurisdictions to develop ways to make EMD’s meetings more effective opportunities for two-way communication
7. Establish a regional coordinators program or other mechanisms to develop and maintain the necessary relationships with local emergency managers for successful response. Redirect existing resources or request additional resources as needed

The table below shows the current status of action items the agency initiated to address issues identified in the performance audit report. Please see the [cabinet agency response](#) for additional context and any additional steps already taken.

For an explanation of the columns below, [see the legend](#).

Issue/ Rec	Status	Action Steps	Lead Agency	Due Date	Current Resources ?	Budget Impact?	Legislation Required?	Notes
Rec. 1	Completed	Replace the title “EMD liaison” with “SEOC representative” to align closer with NIMS/ICS common terminology	MIL	7/1/19	Yes	No	No	Completed on 3/22/19; promulgated in SEOC SOP signed 6/30/2019
Rec. 1	Completed	Develop a position description for the SEOC representative along with associated duties and qualification requirements	MIL	7/1/19	Yes	No	No	Completed on 3/22/19; promulgated in SEOC SOP signed 6/30/2019

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Rec. 1	Completed	Modify current standard operating procedures pertaining to SEOC representatives	MIL	6/30/21	Yes	No	No	Completed on 3/22/19; promulgated in SEOC SOP signed 6/30/2019
Rec. 1	Ongoing	Develop education materials to be provided at regional meetings and state conferences to help local jurisdictions understand the role and duties of SEOC representatives	MIL	<del>6/30/21</del> 6/30/22	Yes	No	No	<b>Aug. 2021:</b> Conducted continued outreach through a series of exercises and real-world incident response (full list below). Continued education is required at the Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop, Homeland Security Coordinators Meetings, Local Emergency Preparedness Committee Meetings, Emergency Management Council, Washington State Emergency Management Association conference and Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference.
Rec. 1	Complete	Increase participation of SEOC representatives in local exercises	MIL	6/30/21	Yes	Yes	No	Implemented in local exercises (Columbia Generating Station 2019 Functional Exercise, Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack 2019 Functional Exercise, GridEx 2019 Functional Exercise, Spokane Active Shooter 2020, NW Ammonia Release 2021, Dual Dam Failure 2021, Chief Joseph Dam 2021, Spokane Full Scale Exercise 2021) and real-world incidents (COVID-19 Response 2020/1, Civil Unrest 2020, Wildfire Response 2020, Vaccination Site 2021). Additional exercise support is planned for 2021/22.
Rec. 2	In progress	Assess all IMT stakeholders' interest in participation in an education and training	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	Yes	No	The WA IMT Coalition resumed meetings at the end of March 2021 and has established a regular monthly

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		program. If there is no consensus, regional training sessions would not be an effective means to educate customers on the roles, responsibilities and capabilities of IMTs.						meeting schedule. Education and training were a topic of discussion during the Coalition’s July meeting, with high levels of interest expressed by all Coalition members on behalf of their respective IMTs.
Rec. 2	In progress	If there is consensus among IMTs, agree to standardized training materials and develop a concept for a training program. Because the conduct of IMTs is not currently regulated, legislation would be required to amend chapter 38.52 RCW. We would also need legislative support for additional funding to implement this program (one FTE and an increase of \$20,000 in EMD’s training budget)	MIL	TBD	No	Yes	No	A Credentialing Program Manager has been hired in EMD on March 8, 2021. The Credentialing Program Manager is tasked with establishing statewide voluntary credentialing standards for EOC personnel as single resources based on the National Qualification System and Type 3 All-Hazards IMTs based on the All-Hazard IMT Association’s Interstate Incident Management Qualifications System Guide. In collaboration with the WA IMT Coalition and EMD’s Training Team, the Credentialing Program Manager is working to establish a training program for the state’s IMTs. Participation in the training program is voluntary, with emphasis placed on courses prioritized by the WA IMT Coalition.
Rec. 3-4	In progress	Continue work with our stakeholders to identify opportunities for improvement with WebEOC and include them in the process.	MIL	N/A	Yes	No	No	EMD has secured ½ FTE from Juvare, the vendor of WebEOC, for one year to assist with redesign of and enhancements to EMD’s instance of WebEOC. At the beginning of this project, EMD has assembled a panel comprised of stakeholders to prioritize improvements/enhancements for the coming year. These include:

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								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign of the user interface using a dashboard layout</li> <li>• Closer integration with ArcGIS technology to provide a Common Operating Picture</li> <li>• A document repository</li> <li>• Enhancement to the Resource Tracker</li> </ul> <p>A Workgroup is being established with representation from state agencies, local jurisdictions, tribes, and academia to review and prioritize requirements to be developed in the system during this project.</p> <p>A new process is in development by which any stakeholder can submit change request for consideration.</p>
Rec. 3-4	In progress	Include opportunities to practice the use of WebEOC during our yearly mandatory exercises and monthly SEOC workdays as much as possible	MIL	N/A	Yes	No	No	WebEOC has been and continues to be used in the SEOC during all activations, exercises, and monthly workdays. The ongoing SEOC activation in response to COVID-19 has given state and local EOC staff ample opportunities to practice the use of WebEOC since January 2020. Additionally, WebEOC has been in use this year for severe weather events, civil unrest incidents, and wildland fires.
Rec. 3-4	Deferred	Increase the use of WebEOC by local jurisdictions when we fill Emergency Management Assistance Compact requests for personnel to deploy to disasters affecting other states and territories. These requests are limited and infrequent;	MIL	N/A	Yes	No	No	While resource requests from local jurisdictions or tribes are entered in WebEOC's Resource Tracker, WebEOC is not used to forward EMAC resource requests to local jurisdictions for potential out-of-state deployments. Instead, we provide local jurisdictions

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		however, when they occur, we offer local jurisdictions the opportunity to deploy and gain real-world experience						with the original resource request out of NEMA's EMAC Operations System.
Rec. 5	Completed	Conduct a study to determine the appropriate level of staffing and resourcing necessary to implement and maintain a statewide credentialing program. The study would need to review necessary changes to chapter 38.52 RCW and chapter 1-18 WAC to ensure EMD has the authority to carry out such a program	MIL	2/21/19	Yes	No	No	The Attorney General's Office has determined that EMD does not have the legal authority to establish an enforceable standard for statewide IMT credentialing. Stakeholders have agreed, if the program is implemented, statewide IMT credentialing would be a voluntary opt-in program not requiring any changes to the statute or rules. Therefore, no study is necessary. (See recommendation 2 above.)
Rec. 6	Ongoing	Assess which current information sharing venues/meetings are not meeting stakeholder expectations, and, where feasible, shift our techniques appropriately to meet those expectations	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	No	No	EMD has instituted a monthly information sharing newsletter which updates stakeholders on events and status of programs. Due to the ongoing COVID response we have not held face-to-face meetings, but we have scheduled one for Sept 2021 which takes place before an in-person conference.
Rec. 6	Ongoing	Be more consistent in sending out calendar invites and meeting minutes	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	No	No	Since mi-2019, EMD has been consistent in sending out calendar invites and minutes where appropriate. This has and will continue to be an evolutionary endeavor.  Meeting changes and rescheduling is occurring as required.
Rec. 6	Ongoing	Set aside time during EMD-sponsored meetings to ensure	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	No	No	EMD regularly sets aside time during meetings for stakeholders to present

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		our stakeholders have the ability to present issues or concerns						issues and concerns. This has and will continue to be an evolutionary endeavor. We recently started up meetings of the Emergency Management Council and Emergency Management Advisory Group. Time is regularly set aside for stakeholders to present issues and concerns.
Rec. 6	Ongoing	Refrain from scheduling meetings at the end of conferences or major events and set time to potentially conduct listening sessions	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	No	No	This action step has been incorporated into scheduling of events.
Rec. 7	Ongoing	Engage stakeholders to determine with which specific EMD programs they need a more productive or proactive relationship. Identify any consistent trends and make necessary changes to improve those relationships	MIL	10/1/19				This has and will continue to be an evolutionary endeavor. Program support to counties, cities, and tribes has decreased as a result of COVID response and recovery operations. Some programs are supporting jurisdictional needs as each respective county, city or tribe identifies them.
Rec. 7	Ongoing	Pursue additional funding from the Legislature to support an effective regional coordinators program	MIL	Priority dependent				In September 2019, EMD established a fourth regionally-based position. <i>Future regional staffing will be determined by agency legislative priorities.</i>  We continue to explore ways we can broaden our regional footprint, particularly in Eastern Washington.