

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	Complete/ 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	6/30/21 6/30/22	Yes	No	No	<p>Aug. 2021: 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.</p> <p>9/23/22 Update: Outreach continues as specified above and during the past year was augmented by attendance at local/tribal exercises, workshops, and after-action reviews which involved the Colville Tribe, and Ferry, Okanogan, Cowlitz, and Grays Harbor counties during which the role of the SEOC and SEOC representatives were discussed.</p>
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

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								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	Complete/ Ongoing	Assess all IMT stakeholders' interest in participation in an education and training 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.	MIL	10/1/19 10/1/23	Yes	Yes	No	<p>The WA IMT Coalition resumed meetings at the end of March 2021 and has established a regular monthly 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.</p> <p>9/23/22 Update: an IMT training needs assessment was conducted this year by the WA IMT Coalition. IMT stakeholders have many training needs and are very interested in partnering to engage in training/education/exercise opportunities going forward. The initial effort is complete and development of regional/partnership approaches to training will be pursued.</p>
Rec. 2	Complete	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	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

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		<p>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)</p>						<p>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.</p> <p>9/23/22 Update: As of June 2022, EMD has determined with the Attorney General's Office that we have the authority to certify incident management personnel in Washington and so have promulgated the decision that EMD has adopted AHIMTA IIMQS qualification system for IMT use statewide and that EMD will be the certifying authority. This includes using shared training standards. Efforts to unify statewide EOC credentialing remain underway. A Decision Package was developed and submitted to OFM to request significant stable funding for IMTs to include for training. We assess that revision to RCW is not, in fact, needed to execute the program's strategic goals, particularly if EMD can, as proposed, regulate IMT practice through passthrough grant contract</p>

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								requirements with IMT home jurisdiction agencies.
Rec. 3-4	Complete/ Ongoing	Continue work with our stakeholders to identify opportunities for improvement with WebEOC and include them in the process.	MIL	N/A	Yes	No	No	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign of the user interface using a dashboard layout • Closer integration with ArcGIS technology to provide a Common Operating Picture • A document repository • Enhancement to the Resource Tracker <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> <p>9/23/22 Update: EMD engaged with Juvare (WebEOC vendor), and with statewide stakeholders to document needs for improvement in WebEOC, solicit input, and work towards solutions. Substantial progress was</p>

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								<p>made including updating WebEOC to the newest version and making significant improvements to the resource tracker which is one of the most heavily utilized and challenging portions of our WebEOC instance. A basic dashboard was implemented along with ArcGIS integration, and a document repository is now present. Given the work needed and the criticality of this program, we determined that it would be most efficient and effective to hire an in-house application developer to enable WebEOC updates. We are currently funding an App Dev position for 1 year and have requested permanent funding for that position through a decision package. We have drafted a position description which is in process of position creation with HR now. Stakeholder engagement and WebEOC improvement will be an ongoing effort.</p>
Rec. 3-4	Complete/ Ongoing	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	<p>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.</p>

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								<p>9/23/22 Update: WebEOC continues to be used frequently for any incident the SEOC is involved with managing. Over the past year this has included weather events (heat and cold), flooding and extreme winter weather, jet fuel shortages, wildfires, and exercises. As we bring an internal application developer on board, we will be working to expand WebEOC functionality with the goal of using it more regularly and for a wider array of business needs. Numerous opportunities have been identified, including the potential for use in inventorying and tracking frequently used resources through the state, tracking, and managing search and rescue resources, and for incident logging and common operating picture with the alert and warning center. This will remain an ongoing effort</p>
Rec. 3-4	Deferred	<p>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; however, when they occur, we offer local jurisdictions the opportunity to deploy and gain real-world experience</p>	MIL	N/A	Yes	No	No	<p>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 with the original resource request out of NEMA's EMAC Operations System.</p>
Rec. 5	Completed	<p>Conduct a study to determine the appropriate level of</p>	MIL	2/21/19	Yes	No	No	<p>The Attorney General's Office has determined that EMD does not have the</p>

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		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						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	Complete	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	<p>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.</p> <p>9/8/22 Update: SEP 2021 meeting held virtually. Conducted electronic survey of all stakeholders via monthly newsletter in JUN 2022 regarding techniques. One suggestion was to use fewer acronyms. Upon review, all acronyms used were spelled out on first usage.</p>
Rec. 6	Complete/ Ongoing	Be more consistent in sending out calendar invites and meeting minutes	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	No	No	<p>Since mid-2019, EMD has been consistent in sending out calendar invites and minutes where appropriate. This has and will continue to be an evolutionary endeavor.</p> <p>Meeting changes and rescheduling is occurring as required.</p>

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								<p>9/8/22 Update: Calendar invites are sent a year in advance where applicable; and timely for others. Minutes are sent timely ongoing.</p>
Rec. 6	Complete/ Ongoing	Set aside time during EMD-sponsored meetings to ensure our stakeholders have the ability to present issues or concerns.	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	No	No	<p>EMD regularly sets aside time during meetings for stakeholders to present 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.</p> <p>9/19/22 Update: EMC and EMAG meetings have “Open Forum” time built into agendas. Other meetings regularly invite participants to present issues or concerns as “for the good of the order” and/or as “alibis” at any point during a meeting and prior to the close of a meeting. At the Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA) meeting EMD hosted a directors meeting with the county Emergency Managers. At this meeting all the EMD managers were in attendance and provided briefs on their programs and listened to stakeholders concerns and answered questions. This will also take place at the next WSEMA meeting.</p>

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Rec. 6	Complete/ 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	<p>This action step has been incorporated into scheduling of events.</p> <p>9/19/22 Update: This action is ongoing as a consideration in scheduling meetings. As well, potential participants have input into the scheduling of recurring meetings. The EMD Directors meeting at the Washington State Emergency Management Association was held at the beginning of the conference this year and will be the same for the next meeting.</p>
Rec. 7	Complete/ 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	10/1/23				<p>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.</p> <p>9/8/22 Update: Through day-to-day operations as well as disaster response, EMD is engaging its outreach and support to determine which specific EMD programs they may benefit from further engagement in. Managers, program managers, and program staff are returning to pre-COVID levels of service and meeting in person as frequently as possible to provide technical and policy assistance.</p>
Rec. 7	Complete/ Ongoing	Pursue additional funding from the Legislature to support an	MIL	7/1/25	No	Yes	No	In September 2019, EMD established a fourth regionally based position.

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		effective regional coordinators program						<p><i>Future regional staffing will be determined by agency legislative priorities.</i></p> <p>We continue to explore ways we can broaden our regional footprint, particularly in eastern Washington.</p> <p>9/8/22 Update: EMD has added a goal of establishing a presence in eastern Washington to its strategic plan.</p>