

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	6/30/21	Yes	No	No	Under development for virtual delivery due to COVID at Homeland Security Coordinators Meetings, Local Emergency Preparedness Committee Meetings, Washington State Emergency Management Association conference and Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference.
Rec. 1	In progress	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) and real-world incidents (COVID-19 Response 2020, Civil Unrest 2020). Ongoing implementation is of this recommendation is dependent on exercises being conducted by local jurisdictions with state participation. Availability of SEOC representatives for local exercises is being promoted at the annual Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (Aug 25 + 27).
Rec. 2	In progress	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	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	Yes	No	Interest in education and training program has yet to be determined in collaboration with WA All Hazards IMT Coalition. Coalition meetings have been and continue to be suspended due to COVID-19 response and wildland fire response.

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		customers on the roles, responsibilities and capabilities of 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	See notes above regarding education and training program. The Legislature funded 1 FTE to serve as a credentialing program manager. The PM will develop a credentialing program for IMT based on All Hazards Incident Management Team Association's credentialing standards. This position is subject to elimination due to COVID-19 caused budget shortfalls. 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.
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	In the past year, EMD has implemented process permissions in WebEOC. This allows the 14 state agencies, 37 counties, 15 cities, and 22 tribes to share data statewide while only being able to edit their own data. Boards for which process permissions have been implemented include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide Activity Log and Significant Events • Statewide Share Documents Board • Statewide Sign-In/Out Board

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								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide After-Action Review with Activation, Exercise Evaluation, and LEP Forms • Statewide Shelter Status, with Map • Statewide County Road Status Board, includes Access Control Points and map • Food Bank Staffing Efforts with Map • Statewide EOC Activation Status
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 used in the SEOC during all monthly workdays in 2019 and through February of 2020. The ongoing full 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. Furthermore, we are in consultation with the vendor to update WebEOC to address shortfalls identified by the COVID-19 response.
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; however, when they occur, we offer local jurisdictions the opportunity to deploy and gain real-world experience	MIL	N/A	Yes	No	No	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 Operating System.

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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	This has and will continue to be an evolutionary endeavor. Since February 2020, all stakeholder (non-COVID related) standing executive/director level meetings have been cancelled both in person and virtually (except for E911 Advisory Committee meetings).
Rec. 6	Ongoing	Be more consistent in sending out calendar invites and meeting minutes	MIL	10/1/19	Yes	No	No	For the latter part of 2019. EMD was consistent in sending out calendar invites and minutes where appropriate. This has and will continue to be an evolutionary endeavor. Since February 2020, all stakeholder (non-COVID related) standing executive/director level meetings have been cancelled both in person and virtually (except for E911 Advisory Committee meetings). 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. Since February 2020, all stakeholder (non-COVID related) standing executive/director level meetings have been cancelled both in person and virtually (except for E911 Advisory Committee meetings).
Rec. 6	Ongoing	Refrain from scheduling meetings at the end of conferences or major events and set aside 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				<p>This has and will continue to be an evolutionary endeavor. Since February 2020, all stakeholder (non-COVID related) standing executive/director level meetings have been cancelled both in person and virtually (except for E911 Advisory Committee meetings).</p> <p>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>
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>

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								<p><i>Will not be introduced during the 21-23 biennium due to fiscal constraints the state is experiencing as a result of the costs associated with the COVID response and recovery.</i></p>