

## **II. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

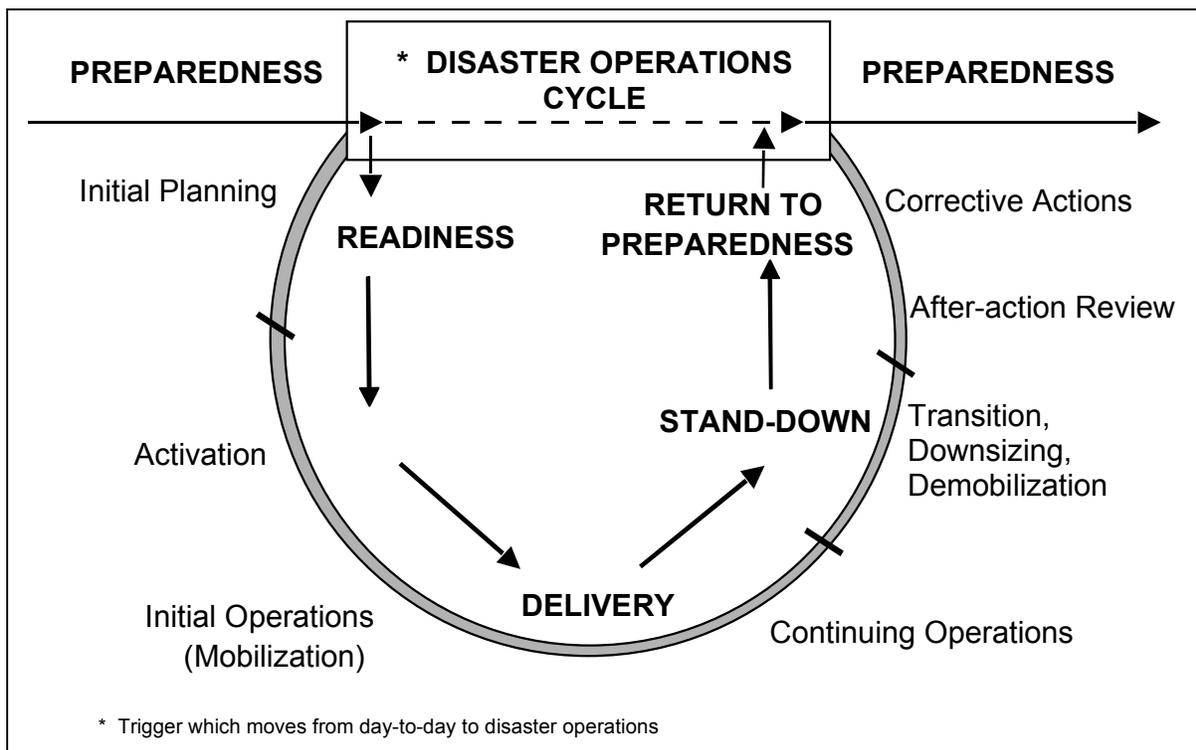
The operations and procedures of the ERT Information and Planning Section are detailed at length in Chapters III through VII. This chapter lists the basic assumptions underlying the policies and procedures set forth in this manual. This chapter also provides a context for the detailed functional guidance in Chapters III through VII by summarizing Information and Planning Section activities in typical response phases.

### **A. ASSUMPTIONS**

The following planning assumptions have governed the development of the policies and procedures contained in this manual:

1. An advance element of the Emergency Response Team (ERT-A) will precede deployment of the full ERT.
2. The State will initially be the primary source of information regarding damages and initial response needs and requirements.
3. Federal departments and agencies will be the primary source of information regarding resource availability and capabilities.
4. Personnel and organizations involved in response and recovery efforts will have an immediate and sustained requirement for information about the situation.
5. Not all communication systems will be immediately or fully available, requiring Section personnel to employ alternate means of communication.
6. There may be a need to deploy field observers within the disaster area to collect additional critical information.
7. There will be delays in establishing full information processing capability.
8. The ERT may be required to operate without logistical support for up to 72 hours, requiring staff to be self-sufficient in terms of supplies and equipment.
9. Initial Information and Planning Section activities may require extended shifts or continuous, 24-hour operations.
10. Initial Section staffing in the field will be provided, via the Automated Deployment Database (ADD), by a mixture of permanent full-time and reservist FEMA personnel, supported by other Federal agency representatives. Locally hired personnel (supervised by FEMA staff) will be used as appropriate.
11. Sufficient experienced reservist personnel will be available to deploy to a Disaster Field Office (DFO) to support the Information and Planning Section staffing level required by the situation.

**Figure II-1 – Disaster Operations Cycle**



**B. THE DISASTER OPERATIONS CYCLE**

Information and Planning operations officially begin when the FRP is implemented (normally at the Activation phase of the Disaster Operations Cycle; see Figure II-1) and continue through the Stand-Down phase. Preparedness activities, although critical to effective information and planning operations, are not a formal Information and Planning Section activity. Information and planning preparedness activities are the responsibility of designated Regional and Headquarters program offices.

**C. NOTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION**

Every ERT activation includes an Information and Planning component, even if that component is only a single position. Therefore, activation of the Information and Planning Section occurs whenever one or more elements of an ERT deploy to a disaster site or threatened area. The decision to activate an ERT is made by a Regional Director (for an ERT or ERT-A) or the FEMA Director (for the ERT-N). Once activated, the implementing organization determines the Section positions to be staffed, and notifies supporting personnel via telephone or pager. Non-FEMA personnel are notified through their agency operations centers.

**D. DEPLOYMENT**

1. The first Information and Planning Section presence to arrive in an affected or threatened area usually are Regional personnel assigned to an ERT-A. These personnel may be on the basic ERT-A itself, or assigned to one or more Rapid

Needs Assessment (RNA) teams, which report to the ERT-A Team Leader. The Information and Planning personnel assigned to the basic ERT-A coordinate with their State counterparts at the State EOC (or comparable facility) and provide information back to the ROC. RNA team members deploy to and operate from the field, and report back to the ERT-A.

2. Once a DFO site has been identified, the next wave of Information and Planning personnel will deploy as part of the full ERT. This contingent typically is a mixture of reservists and Regional personnel (or, if an ERT-N is being deployed, a mixture of FEMA Headquarters and Regional personnel). An ERT-N is normally only deployed for catastrophic disasters or when Regional response resources are already committed to other major disasters. The size of this initial contingent depends on the situation. Refer to Figure VII-3 for a chart depicting Information and Planning Section staffing level minimums.

3. Following the establishment of the DFO, the Section Chief, based on discussions with the Branch Chiefs, continually assesses the current and projected workload and determines if additional staffing is required. Where necessary, additional personnel will be requested using the ADD.

## **E. DELIVERY**

The products and services delivered by the Information and Planning Section are detailed at length in Chapters III through VII. Each chapter addresses the standard responsibilities, procedures and practices for a specific functional area of the Section.

## **F. STAND DOWN**

The demobilization process is governed by an ERT Demobilization Plan, which is coordinated and prepared by the Information and Planning Section (through the Planning Support Branch). Developing a plan that fully and effectively articulates a comprehensive, responsive, and flexible stand-down strategy is a key part of ERT management planning. For guidance on demobilization planning, refer to Chapter IV, paragraph IV-H-3.

## **G. RETURN TO PREPAREDNESS**

Following DFO closure, ERT Information and Planning personnel return to their normal duty locations. However, the following actions will be taken to prepare for any subsequent deployment(s):

1. Returning Regional and reservist personnel should:
  - a. Ensure that the ADD is updated to reflect proper assignment information, to include:
    - (1) Correct job title(s).
    - (2) Dates for the work performed in support of the operation.
    - (3) Availability for subsequent deployment.

b. Replace any personally-maintained, professional resources (e.g., references or go-kit items) that were used up, lost, damaged, or left behind.

c. Advise the Regional Information and Planning POC of any problems or innovations that could hinder or enhance future ERT operations.

2. The Disaster Information Systems Clearinghouse (DISC) should examine and rehabilitate returned Information and Planning Section support equipment (e.g., Section Kits and GIS Suites), so it is ready for use in a subsequent disaster response operation.