

Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities



National Standards for
State, Local, Tribal, and
Territorial Public Health

October 2018
Updated January 2019



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
Center for Preparedness
and Response



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement Program.....	2
Capability Update Initiative	3
Using the Capability Standards for Strategic Planning	7
Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities Planning Model.....	7
Phase 1: Assess Current State	8
Phase 2: Determine Strategies and Activities.....	9
Phase 3: Develop Plans.....	10
At-A-Glance: Capability Definitions, Functions, and Summary of Changes	11
Capability 1: Community Preparedness.....	11
Capability 2: Community Recovery.....	12
Capability 3: Emergency Operations Coordination	12
Capability 4: Emergency Public Information and Warning.....	13
Capability 5: Fatality Management	13
Capability 6: Information Sharing	14
Capability 7: Mass Care	14
Capability 8: Medical Countermeasure Dispensing and Administration.....	15
Capability 9: Medical Materiel Management and Distribution	15
Capability 10: Medical Surge	16
Capability 11: Nonpharmaceutical Interventions.....	16
Capability 12: Public Health Laboratory Testing	17
Capability 13: Public Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Investigation	17
Capability 14: Responder Safety and Health	18
Capability 15: Volunteer Management.....	18

Capability 1: Community Preparedness19

- Function 1: Determine risks to the health of the jurisdiction..... 20
- Function 2: Strengthen community partnerships to support public health preparedness 22
- Function 3: Coordinate with partners and share information through community social networks24
- Function 4: Coordinate training and provide guidance to support community involvement with preparedness efforts 25

Capability 2: Community Recovery 27

- Function 1: Identify and monitor community recovery needs 28
- Function 2: Support recovery operations for public health and related systems for the community 29
- Function 3: Implement corrective actions to mitigate damage from future incidents32

Capability 3: Emergency Operations Coordination 34

- Function 1: Conduct preliminary assessment to determine the need for activation of public health emergency operations 34
- Function 2: Activate public health emergency operations..... 36
- Function 3: Develop and maintain an incident response strategy 39
- Function 4: Manage and sustain the public health response..... 39
- Function 5: Demobilize and evaluate public health emergency operations41

Capability 4: Emergency Public Information and Warning 43

- Function 1: Activate the emergency public information system..... 43
- Function 2: Determine the need for a Joint Information System 46
- Function 3: Establish and participate in information system operations47
- Function 4: Establish avenues for public interaction and information exchange..... 48
- Function 5: Issue public information, alerts, warnings, and notifications..... 50

Capability 5: Fatality Management 52

- Function 1: Determine the public health agency role in fatality management53
- Function 2: Identify and facilitate access to public health resources to support fatality management operations.....55
- Function 3: Assist in the collection and dissemination of antemortem data..... 58
- Function 4: Support the provision of survivor mental/behavioral health services.....59
- Function 5: Support fatality processing and storage operations 60

Capability 6: Information Sharing 62

 Function 1: Identify stakeholders that should be incorporated into information flow and define information sharing needs 63

 Function 2: Identify and develop guidance, standards, and systems for information exchange 64

 Function 3: Exchange information to determine a common operating picture67

Capability 7: Mass Care 70

 Function 1: Determine public health role in mass care operations71

 Function 2: Determine mass care health needs of the impacted population 72

 Function 3: Coordinate public health, health care, and mental/behavioral health services75

 Function 4: Monitor mass care population health 78

Capability 8: Medical Countermeasure Dispensing and Administration 80

 Function 1: Determine medical countermeasure dispensing/administration strategies.....81

 Function 2: Receive medical countermeasures to be dispensed/administered..... 84

 Function 3: Activate medical countermeasure dispensing/administration operations..... 86

 Function 4: Dispense/administer medical countermeasures to targeted population(s) 88

 Function 5: Report adverse events 90

Capability 9: Medical Materiel Management and Distribution 92

 Function 1: Direct and activate medical materiel management and distribution 93

 Function 2: Acquire medical materiel from national stockpiles or other supply sources 97

 Function 3: Distribute medical materiel 99

 Function 4: Monitor medical materiel inventories and medical materiel distribution operations 100

 Function 5: Recover medical materiel and demobilize distribution operations 101

Capability 10: Medical Surge 103

 Function 1: Assess the nature and scope of the incident 104

 Function 2: Support activation of medical surge 106

 Function 3: Support jurisdictional medical surge operations 109

 Function 4: Support demobilization of medical surge operations.....110

Capability 11: Nonpharmaceutical Interventions112

- Function 1: Engage partners and identify factors that impact nonpharmaceutical interventions113
- Function 2: Determine nonpharmaceutical interventions114
- Function 3: Implement nonpharmaceutical interventions115
- Function 4: Monitor nonpharmaceutical interventions.....118

Capability 12: Public Health Laboratory Testing 120

- Function 1: Conduct laboratory testing and report results121
- Function 2: Enhance laboratory communications and coordination124
- Function 3: Support training and outreach126

Capability 13: Public Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Investigation 128

- Function 1: Conduct or support public health surveillance 129
- Function 2: Conduct public health and epidemiological investigations132
- Function 3: Recommend, monitor, and analyze mitigation actions.....135
- Function 4: Improve public health surveillance and epidemiological investigation systems 136

Capability 14: Responder Safety and Health 138

- Function 1: Identify responder safety and health risks139
- Function 2: Identify and support risk-specific responder safety and health training141
- Function 3: Monitor responder safety and health during and after incident response.....142

Capability 15: Volunteer Management 146

- Function 1: Recruit, coordinate, and train volunteers147
- Function 2: Notify, organize, assemble, and deploy volunteers 149
- Function 3: Conduct or support volunteer safety and health monitoring and surveillance151
- Function 4: Demobilize volunteers.....152

Glossary of Terms 154

Acknowledgements 167



At-A-Glance: Capability Definitions, Functions, and Summary of Changes

Capability 1: Community Preparedness

Definition: Community preparedness is the ability of communities to prepare for, withstand, and recover from public health incidents in both the short and long term. Through engagement and coordination with a cross-section of state, local, tribal, and territorial partners and stakeholders, the public health role in community preparedness is to

- Support the development of public health, health care, human services, mental/behavioral health, and environmental health systems that support community preparedness
- Participate in awareness training on how to prevent, respond to, and recover from incidents that adversely affect public health
- Identify at-risk individuals with access and functional needs that may be disproportionately impacted by an incident or event
- Promote awareness of and access to public health, health care, human services, mental/behavioral health, and environmental health resources that help protect the community's health and address the access and functional needs of at-risk individuals
- Engage in preparedness activities that address the access and functional needs of the whole community as well as cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic factors
- Convene or participate with community partners to identify and implement additional ways to strengthen community resilience
- Plan to address the health needs of populations that have been displaced because of incidents that have occurred in their own or distant communities, such as after a radiological or nuclear incident or natural disaster

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Determine risks to the health of the jurisdiction
- Function 2: Strengthen community partnerships to support public health preparedness
- Function 3: Coordinate with partners and share information through community social networks
- Function 4: Coordinate training and provide guidance to support community involvement with preparedness efforts

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Defines at-risk individuals as people with access and functional needs that may be disproportionately impacted by an incident or event, and provides parameters to identify those populations
- Highlights Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements in jurisdictional public health preparedness and response plans
- Accentuates the importance of community partnerships, including tribes and native-serving organizations in public health preparedness and response activities
- Promotes integration of community partners to support restoration of community networks and social connectedness to improve community resilience



Capability 2: Community Recovery

Definition: Community recovery is the ability of communities to identify critical assets, facilities, and other services within public health, emergency management, health care, human services, mental/behavioral health, and environmental health sectors that can guide and prioritize recovery operations. Communities should consider collaborating with jurisdictional partners and stakeholders to plan, advocate, facilitate, monitor, and implement the restoration of public health, health care, human services, mental/behavioral health, and environmental health sectors to at least a day-to-day level of functioning comparable to pre-incident levels and to improved levels, where possible.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Identify and monitor community recovery needs
- Function 2: Support recovery operations for public health and related systems for the community
- Function 3: Implement corrective actions to mitigate damage from future incidents

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Highlights the need to define the jurisdictional public health agency recovery lead and support role
- Supports the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF)
- Promotes integration of community partners to support community recovery and restoration
- Emphasizes engagement of community partners to access hard-to-reach populations to ensure inclusive communications that meet the needs of the whole community

Capability 3: Emergency Operations Coordination

Definition: Emergency operations coordination is the ability to coordinate with emergency management and to direct and support an incident or event with public health or health care implications by establishing a standardized, scalable system of oversight, organization, and supervision that is consistent with jurisdictional standards and practices and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Conduct preliminary assessment to determine the need for activation of public health emergency operations
- Function 2: Activate public health emergency operations
- Function 3: Develop and maintain an incident response strategy
- Function 4: Manage and sustain the public health response
- Function 5: Demobilize and evaluate public health emergency operations

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Distinguishes the need to identify and clarify the jurisdictional ESF #8 response role based on incident type and characteristics
- Incorporates the National Health Security Strategy and Crisis Standards of Care for public health activation
- Emphasizes the importance of supporting development of mission-ready packages (MRPs) for mutual aid and understanding the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)



Capability 4: Emergency Public Information and Warning

Definition: Emergency public information and warning is the ability to develop, coordinate, and disseminate information, alerts, warnings, and notifications to the public and incident management personnel.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Activate the emergency public information system
- Function 2: Determine the need for a Joint Information System
- Function 3: Establish and participate in information system operations
- Function 4: Establish avenues for public interaction and information exchange
- Function 5: Issue public information, alerts, warnings, and notifications

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Promotes the need to leverage social media platforms for issuing emergency public information and warnings
- Clarifies conditions for establishing a virtual Joint Information Center and Joint Information System
- Includes content to identify and reach populations at risk to be disproportionately impacted by incidents and those with limited access to public information messages

Capability 5: Fatality Management

Definition: Fatality management is the ability to coordinate with partner organizations and agencies to provide fatality management services. The public health agency role in fatality management activities may include supporting

- Recovery and preservation of remains
- Identification of the deceased
- Determination of cause and manner of death
- Release of remains to an authorized individual
- Provision of mental/behavioral health assistance for the grieving

The role also may include supporting activities for the identification, collection, documentation, retrieval, and transportation of human remains, personal effects, and evidence to the examination location or incident morgue.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Determine the public health agency role in fatality management
- Function 2: Identify and facilitate access to public health resources to support fatality management operations
- Function 3: Assist in the collection and dissemination of antemortem data
- Function 4: Support the provision of survivor mental/behavioral health services
- Function 5: Support fatality processing and storage operations



Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Clarifies importance of identifying the public health agency role in fatality management and describes potential fatality management lead, advisory, and support roles
- Aligns the fatality management definition to the existing federal definition as recommended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT)
- Updates resources to improve coordination, accuracy, and timeliness of electronic mortality reporting

Capability 6: Information Sharing

Definition: Information sharing is the ability to conduct multijurisdictional and multidisciplinary exchange of health-related information and situational awareness data among federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels of government and the private sector. This capability includes the routine sharing of information as well as issuing of public health alerts to all levels of government and the private sector in preparation for and in response to events or incidents of public health significance.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Identify stakeholders that should be incorporated into information flow and define information sharing needs
- Function 2: Identify and develop guidance, standards, and systems for information exchange
- Function 3: Exchange information to determine a common operating picture

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Increases alignment to public health surveillance and data strategies
- Emphasizes the need to implement data security and cybersecurity
- Emphasizes the need to decrease reporting time and increase collaboration by expanding use of electronic information systems, such as electronic death registration (EDR), electronic laboratory reporting (ELR), and syndromic surveillance systems

Capability 7: Mass Care

Definition: Mass care is the ability of public health agencies to coordinate with and support partner agencies to address, within a congregate location (excluding shelter-in-place locations), the public health, health care, mental/behavioral health, and human services needs of those impacted by an incident. This capability includes coordinating ongoing surveillance and public health assessments to ensure that health needs continue to be met as the incident evolves.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Determine public health role in mass care operations
- Function 2: Determine mass care health needs of the impacted population
- Function 3: Coordinate public health, health care, and mental/behavioral health services
- Function 4: Monitor mass care population health



Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Incorporates content for accommodating individuals with access and functional needs within general population shelters
- Includes considerations for registration of individuals requiring decontamination or medical tracking in the event of an environmental health incident
- Coordinated content with the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response's (ASPR) Health Care Preparedness and Response Capabilities

Capability 8: Medical Countermeasure Dispensing and Administration

Definition: Medical countermeasure dispensing and administration is the ability to provide medical countermeasures to targeted population(s) to prevent, mitigate, or treat the adverse health effects of a public health incident, according to public health guidelines. This capability focuses on dispensing and administering medical countermeasures, such as vaccines, antiviral drugs, antibiotics, and antitoxins.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Determine medical countermeasure dispensing/administration strategies
- Function 2: Receive medical countermeasures to be dispensed/administered
- Function 3: Activate medical countermeasure dispensing/administration operations
- Function 4: Dispense/administer medical countermeasures to targeted population(s)
- Function 5: Report adverse events

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Revises the Capability 8 title, definition, and content to account for both the dispensing and the administration of medical countermeasures, such as vaccines, antidotes, and antitoxins
- Adds content and resources to account for potential radiological or nuclear exposure
- Broadens the network of dispensing and administration sites to include pharmacies and other locations

Capability 9: Medical Materiel Management and Distribution

Definition: Medical materiel management and distribution is the ability to acquire, manage, transport, and track medical materiel during a public health incident or event and the ability to recover and account for unused medical materiel, such as pharmaceuticals, vaccines, gloves, masks, ventilators, or medical equipment after an incident.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Direct and activate medical materiel management and distribution
- Function 2: Acquire medical materiel from national stockpiles or other supply sources
- Function 3: Distribute medical materiel
- Function 4: Monitor medical materiel inventories and medical materiel distribution operations
- Function 5: Recover medical materiel and demobilize distribution operations



Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Broadens the cold chain management guidance to include all aspects of storage and handling
- Expands recovery activities to incorporate proper handling and disposal of infectious, hazardous, or contaminated material and waste
- Accounts for security and inventory management tasks that occur throughout the entire distribution process

Capability 10: Medical Surge

Definition: Medical surge is the ability to provide adequate medical evaluation and care during events that exceed the limits of the normal medical infrastructure of an affected community. It encompasses the ability of the health care system to endure a hazard impact, maintain or rapidly recover operations that were compromised, and support the delivery of medical care and associated public health services, including disease surveillance, epidemiological inquiry, laboratory diagnostic services, and environmental health assessments.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Assess the nature and scope of the incident
- Function 2: Support activation of medical surge
- Function 3: Support jurisdictional medical surge operations
- Function 4: Support demobilization of medical surge operations

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Emphasizes the need to define public health agency lead and support roles within medical surge operations
- Eliminates use of the term “HAvBED” because the term is no longer promoted by the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) and focuses instead on “situational awareness” and “health care systems tracking” as an overarching theme
- Emphasizes the need to identify and clarify the jurisdictional ESF #8 response role in medical surge operations based on jurisdictional role and incident characteristics

Capability 11: Nonpharmaceutical Interventions

Definition: Nonpharmaceutical interventions are actions that people and communities can take to help slow the spread of illness or reduce the adverse impact of public health emergencies. This capability focuses on communities, community partners, and stakeholders recommending and implementing nonpharmaceutical interventions in response to the needs of an incident, event, or threat. Nonpharmaceutical interventions may include

- Isolation
- Quarantine
- Restrictions on movement and travel advisories or warnings
- Social distancing
- External decontamination
- Hygiene
- Precautionary protective behaviors



Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Engage partners and identify factors that impact nonpharmaceutical interventions
- Function 2: Determine nonpharmaceutical interventions
- Function 3: Implement nonpharmaceutical interventions
- Function 4: Monitor nonpharmaceutical interventions

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Focuses on collaboration by expanding suggested partners for implementing nonpharmaceutical interventions
- Supports establishment of community reception center processes to enhance ability to respond to radiological and nuclear threats
- Highlights management of mass gatherings (delay and cancel) based on all-hazards scenarios

Capability 12: Public Health Laboratory Testing

Definition: Public health laboratory testing is the ability to implement and perform methods to detect, characterize, and confirm public health threats. It also includes the ability to report timely data, provide investigative support, and use partnerships to address actual or potential exposure to threat agents in multiple matrices, including clinical specimens and food, water, and other environmental samples. This capability supports passive and active surveillance when preparing for, responding to, and recovering from biological, chemical, and radiological (if a Radiological Laboratory Response Network is established) public health threats and emergencies.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Conduct laboratory testing and report results
- Function 2: Enhance laboratory communications and coordination
- Function 3: Support training and outreach

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Updates Laboratory Response Network (LRN) requirements
- Incorporates LRN-chemical requirements
- Prioritizes cooperation, coordination, and information sharing with LRN laboratories, other public laboratories, and jurisdictional sentinel laboratories

Capability 13: Public Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Investigation

Definition: Public health surveillance and epidemiological investigation is the ability to create, maintain, support, and strengthen routine surveillance and detection systems and epidemiological investigation processes. It also includes the ability to expand these systems and processes in response to incidents of public health significance.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Conduct or support public health surveillance
- Function 2: Conduct public health and epidemiological investigations



- Function 3: Recommend, monitor, and analyze mitigation actions
- Function 4: Improve public health surveillance and epidemiological investigation systems

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Increases alignment to public health surveillance and data strategies
- Strengthens surveillance systems for persons in isolation or quarantine and persons placed under monitoring and movement protocols
- Emphasizes syndromic surveillance and data collection to improve situational awareness and responsiveness to hazardous events and disease outbreaks, for example, participation in CDC's National Syndromic Surveillance Program BioSense Platform

Capability 14: Responder Safety and Health

Definition: Responder safety and health is the ability to protect public health and other emergency responders during pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Identify responder safety and health risks
- Function 2: Identify and support risk-specific responder safety and health training
- Function 3: Monitor responder safety and health during and after incident response

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Incorporates the need to securely manage responder data
- Improves responder on-site management, tracking, in-processing, and out-processing
- Reprioritizes hierarchy of control and promotes the alignment of responder safety and health control measures, for example, personal protective equipment (PPE), with jurisdictional risk assessment findings

Capability 15: Volunteer Management

Definition: Volunteer management is the ability to coordinate with emergency management and partner agencies to identify, recruit, register, verify, train, and engage volunteers to support the jurisdictional public health agency's preparedness, response, and recovery activities during pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.

Functions: This capability consists of the ability to perform the functions listed below.

- Function 1: Recruit, coordinate, and train volunteers
- Function 2: Notify, organize, assemble, and deploy volunteers
- Function 3: Conduct or support volunteer safety and health monitoring and surveillance
- Function 4: Demobilize volunteers

Summary of Changes: The updates align content with new national standards, updated science, and current public health priorities and strategies. Listed below are specific changes made to this capability.

- Addresses the need to monitor volunteer safety, risks, and actions during and after an incident
- Strengthens and clarifies volunteer eligibility considerations, such as medical, physical, and emotional health, during the volunteer selection process
- Promotes use of Emergency Responder Health Monitoring and Surveillance™ (ERHMS™)