INTRODUCTION:

(1) Emergency response plans in the United States fall into three categories, defined by: (a) functional level, (b) detail, (c) physical size, (d) applicability to a particular incident, (e) when completed, and (f) lifespan. Table 1 compares these criteria by type of plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Type:</th>
<th>Level:</th>
<th>Detail:</th>
<th>Size:</th>
<th>Applicable to a Specific Incident:</th>
<th>When Completed:</th>
<th>Lifespan:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Operations Plan</td>
<td>policy and strategic</td>
<td>broad to detailed</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>general</td>
<td>multi-year cycle prior to event</td>
<td>continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Plan</td>
<td>tactical</td>
<td>very detailed</td>
<td>pages</td>
<td>specific building</td>
<td>when changes noted prior to event</td>
<td>as long as building remains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident Action Plan</td>
<td>tactical</td>
<td>broad to very detailed</td>
<td>pages</td>
<td>specific incident</td>
<td>for each shift during event</td>
<td>8-24 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS:

(2) Emergency management has a long history of planning for disaster. In the United States early planning efforts concentrated on the development of credible plans for response to nuclear attack (United States 1957, California 1959). In the evolution to Comprehensive Emergency Management (United States 1989), these documents became all hazards plans for a wide variety of threats (City of Fredericksburg 1995, El Paso County 1989).

(3) The outcome of this development process is a document that is designed to address disasters in a generic sense and to provide broad guidance on the jurisdiction’s concept of how to respond.
At the same time the plan provides functional and hazard specific guidance to ensure government can carry out its legal responsibilities for population protection (United States 1985, 1996a). Perhaps the ultimate version of such a plan is the Federal Response Plan of 1992, the first truly national level disaster plan, which lays out organization and responsibilities, but does not address any specific scenario. This focus on structure and allocation makes these strategic documents.

(4) There has been criticism of both the mechanism and products of emergency operations planning processes. The lack of adaptive planning, the narrowness of the participant base, and the failure to move beyond templates to research based approaches have been suggested as significant limitations to many Emergency Operations Plans. However, there is general agreement that properly designed plans are a critical part of a jurisdiction's preparedness process and that they can have a significant impact on disaster outcomes (Katez 1988).

PRE-PLANS:

(5) The most basic approach to pre-planning for emergency incidents is the development and distribution of map books to allow the crews of responding units to find the incident location (Davis, 1985). The next level of planning is a run card, originally a paper card (Cotreau 1994, Ditzel 1990) and now computerized as part of computer aided dispatch systems. The run card provides a standard assignment of fire apparatus for key locations in a community.

(6) At a more advanced level, facility pre-plans provide an allocation of response units, detailed information about the facility, the hazards that it represents, and access considerations. Some authors strongly caution that a pre-plan should not suggest tactics to be used at incidents in the facility because of the wide variety of potential incident scenarios (Klaene and Sanders 2000). Others suggest a more tactically oriented plan with deployment guidance and suggested courses of action (Jenaway 1986).

INCIDENT ACTION PLANS:

(7) Incident Action Plans are a product of the Incident Command System, appearing as a component in the first FIRESCOPE and National Interagency Incident Management System literature (United States 1983, 1987). In classic wildland Incident Command System applications, they are written documents completed using standard forms (Carlson 1983), with a plan being produced by the Plans Section on a set schedule for each operational period. Each edition of the Incident Action Plan establishes control objectives and assigns resources to specific tasks for an operational period. They increase the likelihood of coordinated operations, document intent, and serve as a contract for the completion of specific tasks (Perry 1987).

(8) In urban applications of incident command for shorter incidents, written incident action plans are rare. The tendency is to assert they can be oral plans for most incidents (National Fire Service Incident Management Consortium 1993, United States 1996b) or simply not to address incident action planning (Coleman 1997).

RELATIONSHIP OF PLANS:

(9) In use there appears to be little relationship between these planning products. Pre-Plans are prepared in the context of relatively short duration events (which do not trigger development of a written Incident Action Plan). When present, they may shape the oral Incident Action Plan.
Even if response to a pre-planned site is for a disaster, there is no requirement for interaction between Pre-Plan and Emergency Operations Plan. The intent of the Pre-Plan as a site reference sheet seems to preclude such a linkage. The most likely effect one will have on the other is that all the pre-planned resources expected to be available may not be, due to other commitments.

(10) It is questionable whether Incident Action Plans are driven by Emergency Operations Plans in practice. An examination of Incident Action Plans for one major disaster shows no references to the jurisdiction Emergency Operations Plan. Although control objectives were consistent with actions an Emergency Operations Plan might require, there was no clear indication the strategy of the Emergency Operations Plan was being executed (Franklin City and Southampton County Flood Task Force 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d). If this is the case with written Incident Action Plans, it seems likely there would be even less integration in oral plans.

(11) Emergency planning products are developed by three authors: emergency managers for emergency operations plans, fire department staff for pre-plans, and incident command general staff for incident action plans. Each document is prepared at a different time – the Incident Action Plan is prepared under the pressure of an ongoing emergency incident. Achieving integration under these conditions is difficult, and unlikely.

(12) Should response plans be integrated? If the goal is to develop a community wide strategy to defend life and property, the answer would seem to be yes. At the simplest level the intent of strategy in the emergency operations plan should inform the resource choices made in pre-plans and tactical choices of incident action plans. However, a broader level of integration might employ pre-plans for specific high hazard areas covered by an emergency operations plan and use incident action plans to tailor the direction of the emergency operations plan to a specific emergency. Table 2 portrays those relationships.

Table 2. Plan Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan:</th>
<th>Role:</th>
<th>Influences:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Operations Plan</td>
<td>Establishes strategy for jurisdiction response</td>
<td>Sets concept of operations and assigns responsibilities within which Pre-Pans and Incident Action Plans are developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Plan</td>
<td>Provides information about a facility or location</td>
<td>Applies Emergency Operations Plan guidance to resource allocation for specific facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident Action Plan</td>
<td>Plans specific tactics and assignments for a single incident.</td>
<td>Carries out the Emergency Operations Plan for one shift at one incident, initially based on Pre-Plan information, when available.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WORKS CITED:


Franklin City and Southampton County Flood Task Force. **Incident Action Plan for Tuesday September 21, 1999**. Franklin, VA: City of Franklin, 1999.


