
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Executive Order 44 (2007)

ESTABLISHING PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVES IN STATE GOVERNMENT

Importance of the Issue

The Commonwealth of Virginia must be prepared for both man-made and natural disasters. State government is obligated to stand at the forefront of a response to any disaster or emergency by taking appropriate steps to protect the lives of the Commonwealth's citizens and to provide for their well being.

In order to further this mission, it is vitally important that preparedness be considered an essential common good that each executive branch agency diligently maintains. The development and coordination of preparedness initiatives within state government will better equip us with the tools needed to prevent, respond, and recover from a disaster. I, therefore, direct that the following steps to accomplish this end be implemented.

Preparedness as Agency Mission

With the obligation to protect the citizens of the Commonwealth as my primary duty, and by the virtue of authority vested in me by Article 5, Sections 1 and 7 of the Constitution of Virginia and by § 44-146.17 of the Code of Virginia, as Governor and as Director of Emergency Management, I hereby direct all executive branch agencies, including institutions of higher education, to include emergency preparedness planning, training and promotion as a core component of their mission. This order affirms each agency's responsibility, under the guidance of their Emergency Coordination Officer, to actively plan, train, and act in the interest of the protection of the citizens of the Commonwealth and its infrastructure.

Preparedness as an Individual Responsibility

Furthermore, preparedness as a common good requires that not only organizations but also each individual participate in creating and maintaining a “Culture of Preparedness” within the Commonwealth. To this end, I continue the direction that all state employees shall complete the prescribed Terrorism and Security Awareness Orientation course, and direct that all executive branch agencies ensure that this and other individual training required under other authorities, such as appropriate National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, be accomplished. Furthermore, each agency shall maintain a continuing program to encourage individual preparedness and promote a culture of preparedness for its employees.

Preparedness Planning

Furthermore, each executive branch agency shall include emergency preparedness in its strategic planning and performance management process, pursuant to guidelines promulgated by the Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, in collaboration with the Governor’s Cabinet, Commonwealth Preparedness Working Group, the Department of Planning and Budget, and the Council on Virginia’s Future. Such inclusion shall be done in conjunction with the strategic planning process for the 2008-2010 biennium that will begin in the spring of 2007.

Annual Preparedness Assessment

Also, I hereby assign the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness, the authority to create, disseminate, and devise an annual preparedness assessment to gauge the level of preparedness of executive branch agencies, including institutions of higher education. The purpose of conducting such assessment shall be to identify deficiencies and to devise solutions to address those areas of needed improvement.

All executive branch agencies, through their Emergency Coordination Officer, shall complete the annual preparedness assessment and respond as directed by the Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness.

Governor’s Certification Program

Furthermore, I authorize the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness to create the criteria for a Governor’s Preparedness Certification Program to recognize those agencies that represent exemplary preparedness initiatives among state government.

Emergency Plans and Procedures and Training

I direct the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness to certify that each agency, through their Emergency Coordination Officer, has annually updated its emergency plans and procedures in all appropriate respects. Furthermore, under the leadership of the Office of Commonwealth

Preparedness, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the Department of Human Resources Management, each agency will certify annually that appropriate employees have completed the National Incident Management System, Incident Command System, or other appropriate training.

Uniformity, Review, and Testing of Continuity of Operations Plans

Continuity of Operation Planning is critical to the Commonwealth's ability to deliver valuable services to its citizens during and immediately after a disaster. Therefore, to provide for consistent and uniform planning, I hereby direct that each executive branch agency including institutions of higher education with guidance from their Emergency Coordination Officer:

1. Create or update Continuity of Operation Plans to conform to the template produced by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, and
2. Utilize the resources available from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for creating or updating Continuity of Operations Plans.

The process of creating or updating Continuity of Operations Plans shall be completed by April 1 of each year, with an electronic copy sent to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. I authorize the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness, in consultation with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to devise a process for review of all executive branch agencies' Continuity of Operations Plans by the first week of December each year.

Furthermore, I direct the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness to develop an annual Continuity of Operations Plan testing, training and review schedule for all executive branch agencies.

A report on the status of the Commonwealth's executive branch agency's Continuity of Operations Plans, prepared by the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, will be due to me annually, with the first report due December 31, 2007.

This Executive Order works in conjunction with Executive Order 65 (2004), which assigns each designated state department or agency to appoint a lead and one alternate Emergency Coordination Officer for the agency. Included in their responsibilities is the coordination on emergency preparedness, response, and recovery issues. Please reference Executive Order 65 (2004) for more information on the Emergency Coordination Officer duties.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect unless amended or rescinded by further executive order. Given under my hand and the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 12th day of January, 2007.

Timothy M. Kaine, Governor

Attest: _____
Secretary of the Commonwealth