Overview of the National Response Framework

Summary of the National Response Framework

The National Response Framework (NRF) sets the strategy and doctrine for how the whole community builds, sustains, and delivers the response core capabilities identified in the National Preparedness Goal in an integrated manner with the other mission (p. 1). The NRF is a framework for all types of threats and hazards, ranging from accidents, technological hazards, natural disasters, and human-caused incidents (p. 3). The NRF is based on the concept of tiered response with an understanding that most incidents start at the local or tribal level, and as needs exceed resources and capabilities, additional local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, or federal assets may be required (p. 48). Focusing on community lifelines allows emergency managers and their partners to account for these complex interdependencies and prioritize response operations to achieve high-impact, multi-sector benefits (p. 2). First, community lifelines are interdependent and vulnerable to cascading failures (p. ii). Second, community lifeline stabilization relies on businesses and infrastructure owners and operators who have the expertise and primary responsibility for managing their systems in emergencies (p. ii).

Community Lifelines

Figure 1. Community Lifelines for Incident Stabilization

Stabilizing community lifelines is the primary effort during response to lessen threats and hazards to public health and safety, the economy, and security (p. 8). A community lifeline enables the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and is essential to human health and safety or economic security (p. 8). The lifelines are designed to enable emergency managers, infrastructure owners and operators, and other partners to analyze the root cause of an incident impact and then prioritize and deploy resources to effectively stabilize the lifeline (p. 8). Similar to the ESFs, other whole community organizations can work together to stabilize lifelines and meet disaster needs (p. 8).

Core capabilities are used to organize, analyze, and build the functions and services needed in response. The core capabilities developed during the preparedness cycle are applied throughout response to stabilize community lifelines and enable recovery (p. 13). By engaging the whole community to build and deliver the response core capabilities, the Nation is better prepared to respond to a threat or hazard; to assist in restoring basic

services, community functionality, and economic activity; and to facilitate the integration of recovery activities (p. 13).

Table I. Community Lifeline Descriptions

Community Lifeline	Description
Safety and Security	• Law enforcement and government services, as well as the associated assets that maintain communal security, provide search and rescue, evacuations, and firefighting capabilities, and promote responder safety.
Food, Water, Shelter	• Support systems that enable the sustainment of life, such as water treatment, transmission, and distribution systems; food retail and distribution networks; wastewater collection and treatment systems; as well as sheltering, and agriculture.
Health and Medical	• Infrastructure and service providers for medical care, public health, patient movement, fatality management, behavioral health, veterinary support, and health or medical supply chains.
Energy	• Service providers for electric power infrastructure, composed of generation, transmission, and distribution systems, as well as gas and liquid fuel processing, transportation, and delivery systems. Disruptions can have a limiting effect on the functionality of other community lifelines.
Communications	• Infrastructure owners and operators of broadband Internet, cellular networks, landline telephony, cable services (to include undersea

Community Lifeline	Description
	cable), satellite communications services, and broadcast networks (radio and television). Communication systems encompass a large set of diverse modes of delivery and technologies, often intertwined but largely operating independently. Services include elements such as alerts, warnings, and messages, as well as 911 and dispatch. Also includes accessibility of financial services.
Transportation	• Multiple modes of transportation that often serve complementary functions and create redundancy, adding to the inherent resilience in overall transportation networks. Transportation infrastructure generally includes highway/roadways, mass transit, railway, aviation, maritime, pipeline, and intermodal systems.
Hazardous Material	• Systems that mitigate threats to public health/welfare and the environment. This includes assessment of facilities that use, generate, and store hazardous substances, as well as specialized conveyance assets and efforts to identify, contain, and remove incident debris, pollution, contaminants, oil or other hazardous substances.

Table II. Examples of a Steady-State Relationship Between Community Lifelines and Response Core Capabilities

Community Lifeline*	Related Response Core Capabilities**	Infrastructure Systems	Situational Assessment	Operational Coordination	Public Information and Warning	Planning
Safety and Security	• On-scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement • Fire Management and Suppression • Mass Search and Rescue Operations • Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services • Environmental Response/Health and Safety					
Food, Water, Shelter	• Mass Care Services • Logistics and Supply Chain Management					
Health and Medical	• Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services • Fatality Management Services • Environmental Response/Health and Safety • Logistics and Supply Chain Management • Mass Care Services					
Energy (Power & Fuel)	• Logistics and Supply Chain Management					
Communications	• Operational Communications • Public Information and Warning					
Transportation	• Critical Transportation					
Hazardous Material	• Environmental Response/Health and Safety					

* Community Lifelines: How emergency managers assess and prioritize employment of capabilities for stabilization.
** Core Capabilities: An interoperable means to characterize capabilities that may be assessed, built, or validated during preparedness or applied to response operations.

After an incident, initial assessments of the community lifelines (i.e., whether they are impacted and to what extent) help establish incident priorities and objectives that drive response actions (p. 11). Continuously reassessing the status of community lifelines enables decision-makers to adjust operations in ways that can accelerate incident stabilization (p. 11). Using the community lifelines enables emergency managers and decision makers at all levels (e.g., business and infrastructure owners and operators, economic development agencies, comptrollers, public health officials, and healthcare providers) to understand and assess impacts on a community, identify limiting factors, and quickly develop solutions following an incident (p. 11).

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in coordination with the sector-specific agencies, has identified National Critical Functions that enable the Federal Government, in partnership with infrastructure owners and operators, to improve the risk management process before and after an incident and can support community lifeline assessments and stabilization efforts (p. 10). The intent is to efficiently stabilize the incident by anticipating, resourcing, and managing immediate threats to life and property and to set the conditions

for longer-term infrastructure restoration and economic and community recovery (p.11). Community lifelines can be used by all levels of government, the private sector, and other partners to facilitate operational coordination and drive outcome-based response (p. 10).

National Incident Management System

The purpose of NIMS is to provide a common approach to managing incidents (p. 11). NIMS concepts provide for standardized but flexible incident management and support practices that emphasize common principles, a consistent approach for operational structures and supporting mechanisms, and an integrated approach to resource management (p. 11). All of the components of NIMS—resource management, command and coordination, and communications and information management—support response (p. 11). Communities apply NIMS principles to integrate response plans and resources across jurisdictions, departments, the private sector, and NGOs (p. 12).

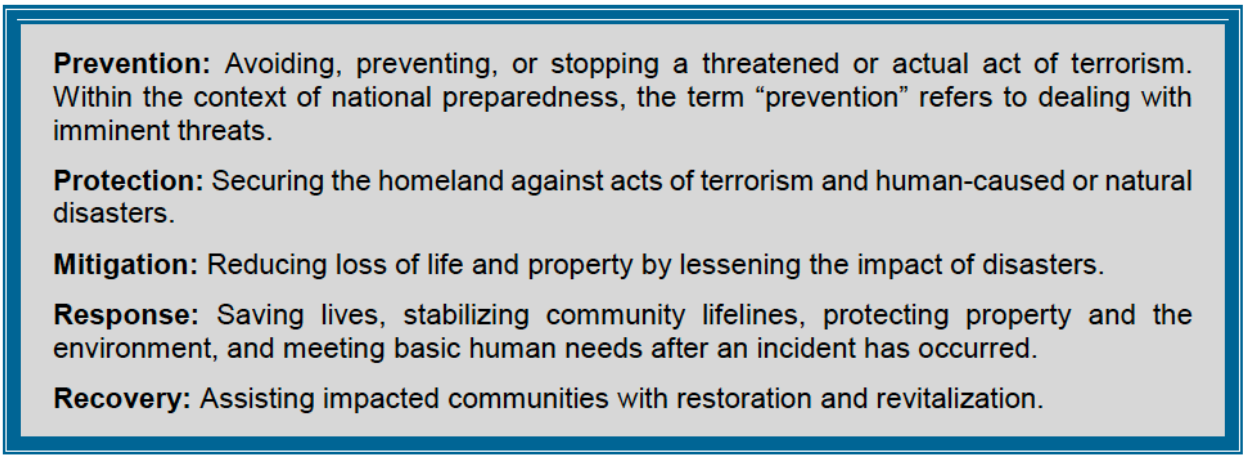


Figure 2. Overview of the National Incident Management System

Prevention. Response organizations coordinate with those responsible for preventing imminent acts of terrorism or an attack (e.g., a significant cyber incident causing cascading and/or physical impacts) to understand both potential and specific threats and to prepare accordingly by creating plans for general threats and crisis action plans for credible threats (p. 13).

- When an incident may have been caused by an intentional act, response organizations coordinate closely with law enforcement agencies to attribute the cause and prevent additional follow-on instances (p. 14).
- Response agencies coordinate with law enforcement agencies to enable themselves to prepare, train, stage, and plan for the delivery of consequence management capabilities (p. 14).

- Response agencies must coordinate with the owners of properties impacted by a particular incident who have the first responsibility for prevention, protection, and response (p. 14).

Protection. Protection of critical infrastructure systems and implementation of plans for the rapid restoration of commercial activities and critical infrastructure operations are crucial aspects of the protection mission area (p. 14). Many of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors within the protection mission area are also represented in the response mission area. The existing infrastructure plans and coordination mechanisms (e.g., sector-specific agencies and councils) provide strong foundations for strengthening incident response plans and capabilities (p. 14). As part of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan, public and private sector partners in each of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors and agencies at all levels of government have developed and maintain sector-specific plans that focus on the unique operating conditions and risk landscape within that sector (p. 14).

- Response agencies should utilize the sector coordination constructs (e.g., sector-specific agencies or sector coordinating councils) to elicit advice and recommendations regarding systemic vulnerabilities, cross-sector interdependencies, and sector-level challenges that could hinder restoration (p. 14).
- Impacts to infrastructure may result in the need for consequence management (e.g., cyberattacks) (p. 14).

Mitigation. Effective mitigation efforts directly limit the impact of an emergency, disaster, or attack on community lifelines and systems, thereby reducing the required scale of response capabilities needed for an incident (p. 14). The National Mitigation Investment Strategy recommends actions for all national stakeholders involved in disaster resilience to reduce risks to and impacts on lifelines, buildings, infrastructure, ecosystems, and cultural, historic, and natural resources (p. 14). Planning, response, and regulatory organizations coordinate to reduce risks to critical infrastructure by evaluating potential threats, encouraging resiliency in infrastructure, and planning for redundancy in services (p. 14). These organizations often have information and the data about hazards and risks that can be shared with response personnel to improve response planning and execution (p. 14).

- Response operations should leverage those organizations with relevant risk management equities to ascertain threats and hazards, understand vulnerabilities, and predict lifeline and survivor impacts or needs to enable more expedient response operations (p. 14).
- Opportunities to lessen the risks of future hazards are an important element to building national resilience (p. 14).

Recovery. As response activities are underway, recovery operations must begin (p. 14). Applying the community lifelines construct enables response officials to more effectively

identify the requirements and sequence steps in the recovery process, including activities that support the economy, by focusing them on vital areas of community support (p. 14). This includes providing essential public health and safety services; restoring interrupted utility and other essential services; reestablishing transportation routes and other infrastructure (e.g., agriculture), providing food, water, and shelter for those displaced by an incident; protecting natural and cultural resources and ensuring environmental compliance; ensuring equal access to services in accordance with applicable laws; reunifying children, adults, and household pets who have been separated from their families/guardians; and reopening schools and child care centers (p. 14-15).

- Response organizations are responsible for setting the conditions that foster a quick and seamless integration of recovery operations and establish conditions that enable a community's recovery (p. 15).
- Effective recovery support also depends on successful information sharing between the ESDs and the six Recovery Support Functions (RSF) under the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) (p. 15).
- Recovery programs—including sheltering and housing, volunteer organization coordination, donations management, small business and agriculture assistance or loans, as well as other disaster assistance—often support response and recovery objectives (p. 15).

Operational Coordination

Successful incident management often depends on the cooperation of multiple jurisdictions, levels of government, functional agencies, NGOs and emergency responder disciplines, and the private sector, which requires effective coordination across a broad spectrum of activities and organizations (p. 15). Accordingly, the optimal disaster response follows the model of being locally executed; state, tribal, territorial, or insular area managed; and federally supported with private sector and NGO engagement throughout (p. 15). Operational coordination occurs across all of these levels and consists of actions and activities that enable decision makers to determine appropriate courses of action and provide oversight for all types of incidents, including complex homeland security operations, to achieve unity of effort and effective outcomes (p. 15).

Locally Executed Response

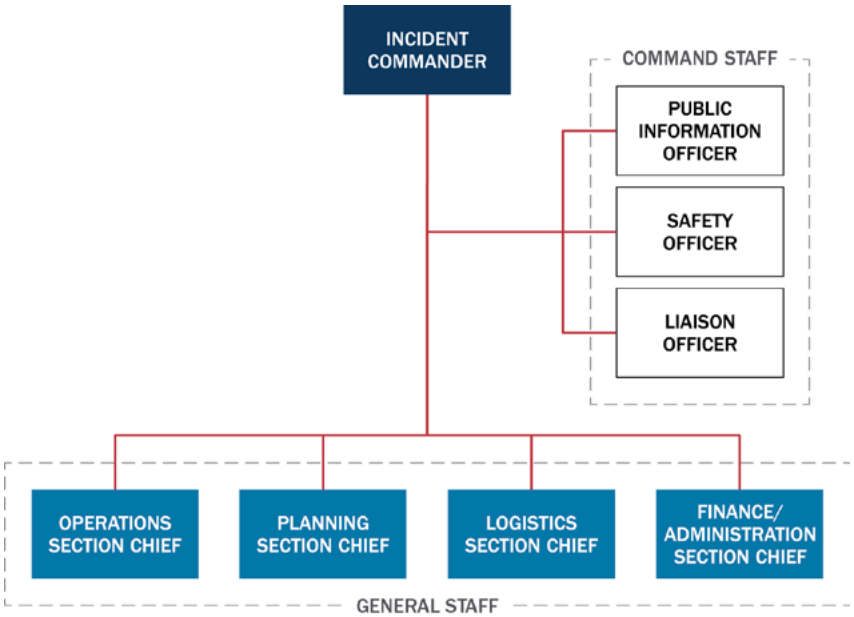


Figure 3. Example of an ICS organization with a Single Incident Commander

Unified Coordination

Unified coordination is the term used to describe the primary state/tribal/territorial/insular area/federal incident management activities conducted at the incident level (p. 19). The Unified Coordination Group (UCG) is composed of senior leaders representing state, tribal, territorial, insular area and federal interests and, in certain circumstances, local 20 jurisdictions, the private sector, and NGOs (p. 19-20).

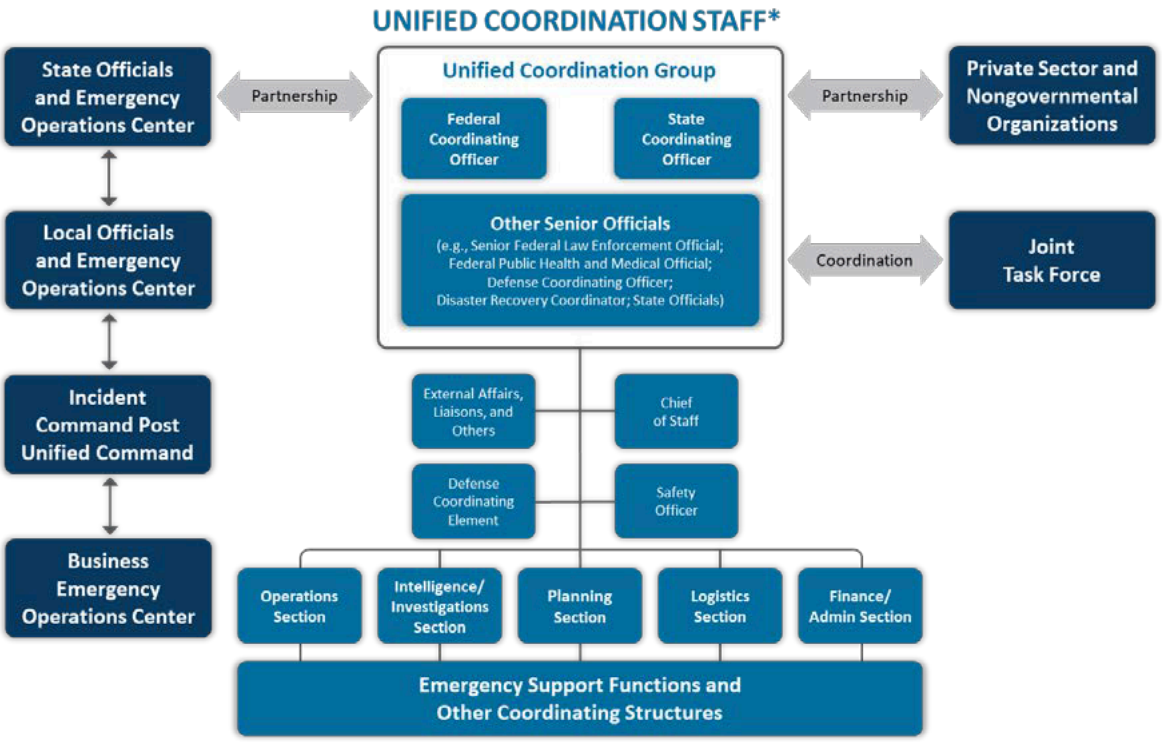
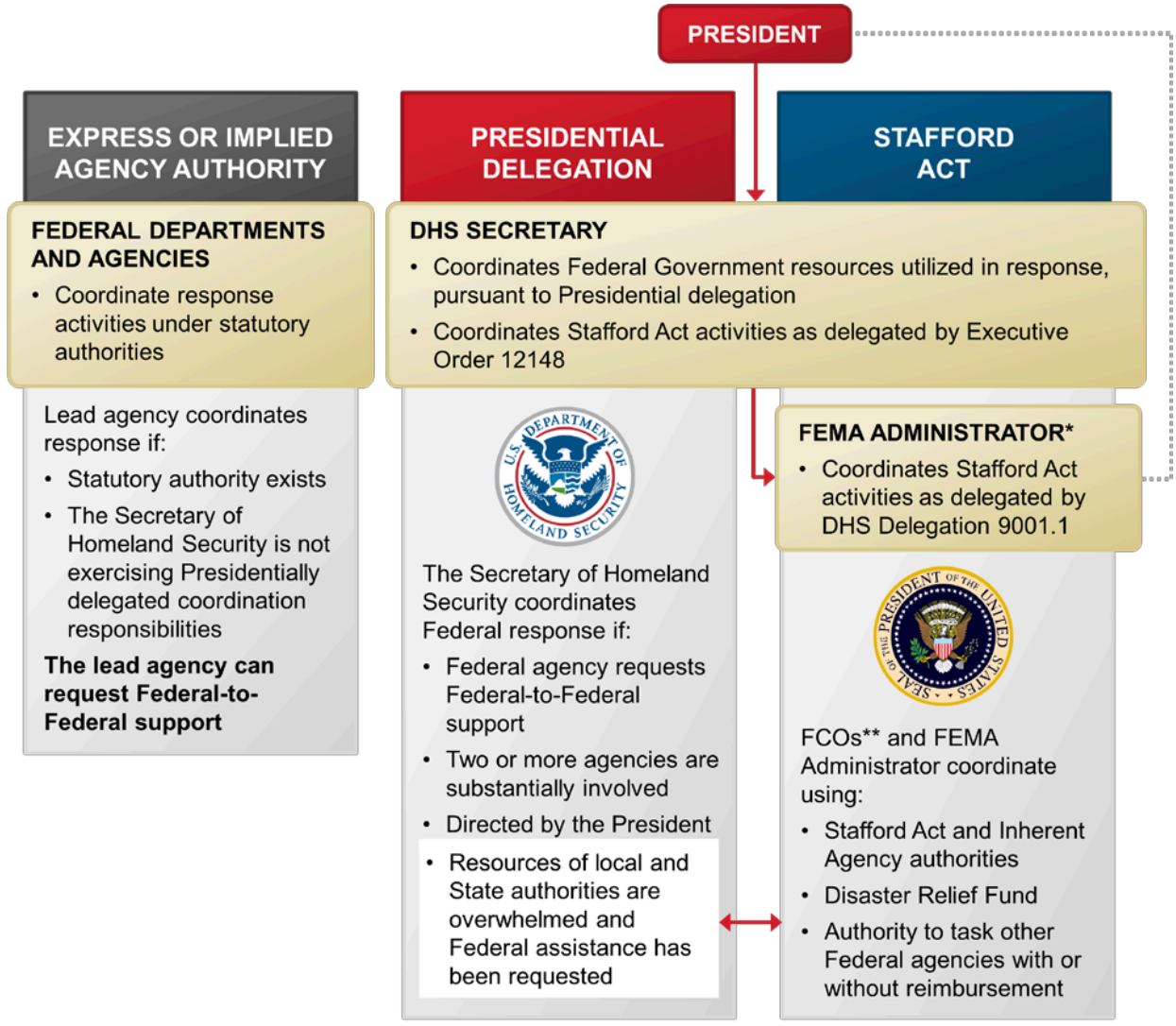


Figure 4. Unified Coordination

Federal Authorities

Federal assistance can be provided to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area jurisdictions, as well as to other federal departments and agencies, through several different mechanisms and authorities (p. 42). Different federal departments or agencies lead coordination of the Federal Government's response actions, depending on their express and implied statutory authorities and based on the type and magnitude of the incident (p. 42). Figure 4 shows the authorities for coordination of federal response support described in the following sections.



* The FEMA Administrator has additional standing authority for response under the Homeland Security Act and Title VI of the Stafford Act. Per the Homeland Security Act, the FEMA Administrator serves as the principal advisor to the President, Homeland Security Council, and Secretary of Homeland Security.

** The Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) is appointed under Section 302 of the Stafford Act.

Figure 5. Incident Management and Response Authorities for the Federal Government

Federal planning is integrated to align, link, and synchronize response actions to enable federal departments and agencies and other national-level partners to provide the right resources at the right time to support local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area government response operations (p. 48). Integrated planning provides answers for which traditional and nontraditional partners can deliver capabilities that stabilize community lifelines and ultimately support the recovery of the community (p. 48). Figure 5 provides an overview of how federal deliberate planning efforts are aligned under the National Preparedness System and are mutually supportive in their development, coordination, and use.

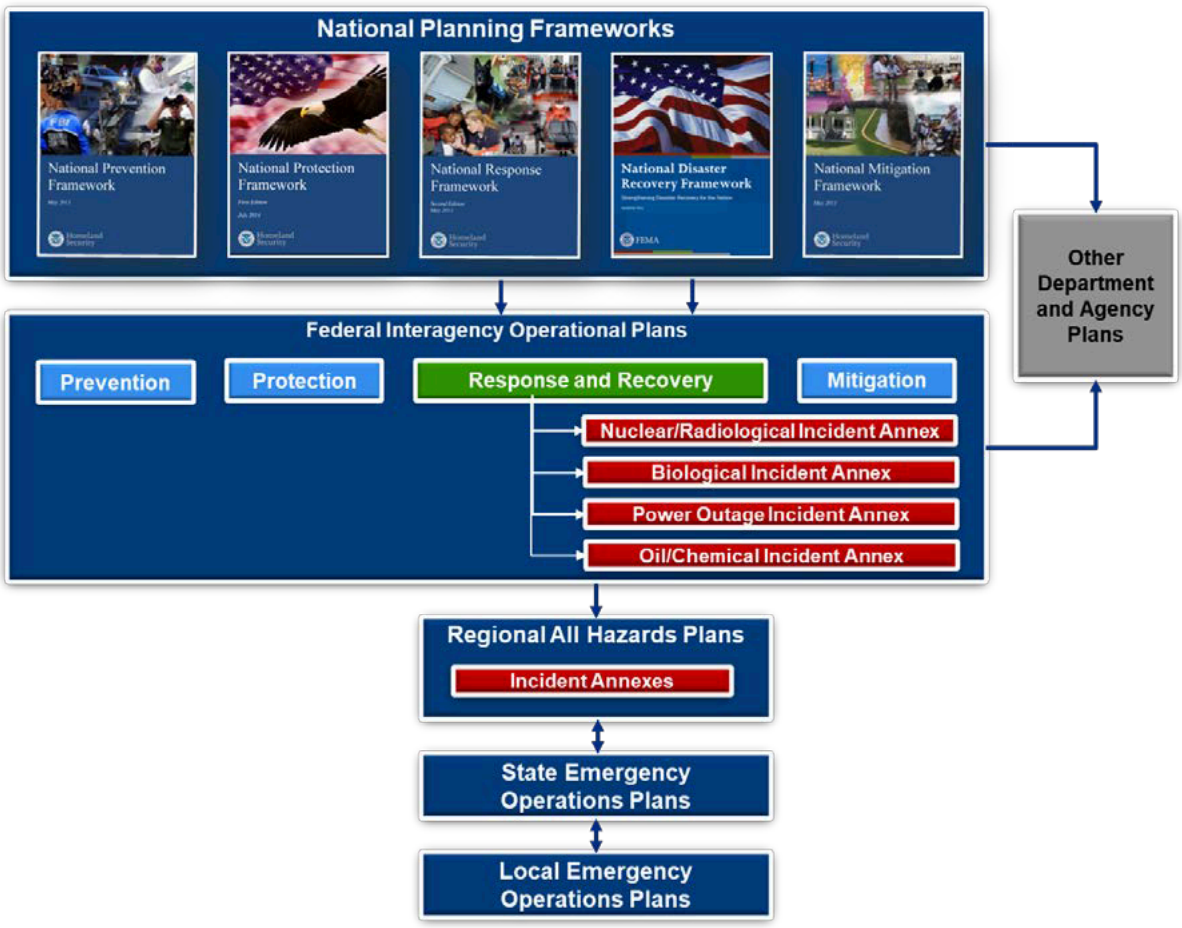


Figure 6. Alignment of Planning efforts with PPD 8 – National Preparedness