



Standard Guide for Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Management¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides general guidelines for the management of an emergency operations center (EOC) prior to, during, and after activation for emergency or disaster support.

1.2 An EOC is where the coordination of response and recovery support is performed, but the EOC is also a physical location that generates its own demands. For the EOC team to perform effectively, the physical and organizational demands of the EOC as a facility must be met. EOC management is distinct from the operational management of the incident.

1.3 This guide may also serve as a foundation for management of a smaller facility such as a department operations center (DOC), larger facilities such as a regional operations center (ROC), or state operations center (SOC) with a broader area of responsibility and more extensive need to communicate and coordinate with others.

1.4 This guide applies to fixed facilities and does not specifically address portable or field-deployable EOCs at temporary locations, virtual EOCs using communications technology to link geographically separated participants, or EOC relocation under a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). However, elements within this document will apply to these situations.

1.5 This guide is the second in a series regarding the EOC. For the Standard Guide for EOC Development, see Guide E2668.

1.6 This document includes some references and terminology specific to the United States of America but may be adapted for use elsewhere.

1.7 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

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2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:²

E2668 Guide for Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Development

2.2 *NFPA Standard*:³

NFPA 1600 Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs

NFPA 1561 Standard of Emergency Services Incident Management System

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *authority having jurisdiction (AHJ)*, *n*—the organization, office, or individual responsible for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure. **NFPA 1561**

3.1.2 *EOC Coordinator*, *n*—individual with responsibility for managing the EOC facility, systems, and procedures during activation of the EOC.

3.1.3 *EOC Planner*, *n*—individual with responsibility for managing and developing the EOC facility, systems, and procedures prior to activation of the EOC (that is, during day-to-day operations).

3.1.4 *EOC team*, *n*—the staff occupying the EOC for the purpose of coordinating response and recovery operations.

3.1.5 *established EOC*, *n*—facility temporarily created to manage or coordinate emergency operations or like functions.

3.1.6 *standing EOC*, *n*—existing fixed facility that serves as a location for entities to manage or coordinate emergency operations or like functions.

3.2 *Acronyms:*

3.2.1 *AHJ*—Authority Having Jurisdiction

3.2.2 *COOP*—Continuity of Operations Plan

3.2.3 *DOC*—Department Operations Center

3.2.4 *EOC*—Emergency Operations Center

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ Available from National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471, <http://www.nfpa.org>.

- 3.2.5 *EOP*—Emergency Operations Plan
- 3.2.6 *NFPA*—National Fire Protection Agency
- 3.2.7 *ROC*—Regional Operations Center
- 3.2.8 *SOC*—State Operations Center
- 3.2.9 *SOG*—Standard Operating Guide
- 3.2.10 *SOP*—Standard Operating Procedures

4. Summary of Guide

4.1 EOC management falls into two general areas: management of the physical facility and management of the systems and procedures that support EOC functions. Facility management focuses on the physical plant, technology systems, and support services needed to maintain these systems. Operational support management addresses the procedures for performing common tasks and operating EOC systems during activation. These two management areas work together to provide an environment that allows the EOC team to focus on the incident with minimal disruption.

4.2 Further complicating EOC management is that the EOC operates differently during activation for an incident than it does on a day-to-day basis. The normal day-to-day operation of the EOC is much like any other office building. Many EOCs are multi-use facilities used for other purposes on a routine basis and converted to an EOC when necessary. However, EOCs must also be capable of sustained 24-h operation, which significantly alters the delivery of support services and places high demands on the facilities.

4.3 This guide provides guidance for facility and operational support management of an EOC under daily and activated conditions.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Coordination of response and recovery support cannot be performed well if the EOC team lacks an appropriate operating environment. An operating environment that increases stress in staff or hinders the ability to perform basic tasks will ultimately degrade the effectiveness of the EOC team. EOC management must be accomplished in parallel with incident management support and should be transparent to the EOC team. EOC management must also be consistent with and support the incident management system used by the EOC team (for example, the Incident Command System mandated for use in the United States under the National Incident Management System). Effective EOC management can be attributed to good preplanning and related training. This guide provides the emergency management community with practical concepts and approaches for effective EOC management.

6. Roles

6.1 EOC management can be divided into three basic phases: pre-activation, activation, and post-activation. Tasks performed during the pre-activation phase maintain the EOC facility and systems and prepare them to support activation. Tasks in the activation phase support the EOC team in conducting response and recovery coordination. The tasks performed during the post-activation phase restore the EOC to a condition to support activation.

6.2 Part of the complexity of EOC management is that these tasks fall into a number of different areas of expertise and can require different skill sets. Consequently, it is easy for critical tasks to be overlooked or not considered if there is no central point of coordination. It is essential, therefore, to designate a lead for each phase of EOC management. Depending on the organization, this could be a single individual or a separate individual could be assigned for each phase.

6.3 For clarity, this document uses the term “EOC Planner” to identify the individual overseeing the pre- and post-activation phases and the title “EOC Coordinator” for the individual overseeing the activation phase. The actual duties and title for these positions will be determined by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

6.4 These roles could be performed by the same individual, that is, a person could be responsible for day-to-day EOC management during the pre-activation phase and then assume the operational position of EOC Coordinator upon activation. The roles could also be split among multiple personnel. For example, in addition to having a planner for the EOC facility, the entity could assign the responsibility for development of EOC procedures and EOC activation to a watch officer or use an on-call duty officer to activate the EOC. EOC management roles should be adapted as needed to meet operational needs. For example, a large EOC may have a weekday EOC Planner, multiple EOC Coordinators during operational periods, and 24-h EOC support staff. A small EOC operation may have a part time EOC Planner who activates as EOC Coordinator for the day operational period, and a trained volunteer as EOC Coordinator for the night operational period.

6.5 The EOC Planner and Coordinator do not necessarily need to perform or directly oversee the various tasks related to EOC management. These tasks may require other technical disciplines or be the responsibility of other supporting departments or agencies. Instead the EOC Planner/Coordinator ensures that these responsibilities are performed and integrated with each other.

6.6 The EOC Planner is an administrative position with responsibility for preparing the EOC facility, systems, and staff for activation. The position may be either a dedicated full or part-time position, or assigned as an additional duty. The EOC Planner ensures the EOC facility is ready for activation, complete with the emergency plans, technology, documentation, standard operating procedures (SOP) or guidelines (SOG) and other tools needed to support EOC operations.

6.6.1 This role may vary greatly from one EOC to another, and should be clearly defined by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

6.6.2 The EOC Planner should be familiar with best practices for EOC site selection, design, construction, and other issues related to the development of an EOC. There may be opportunity to propose and implement some of the information presented in Guide [E2668](#).

6.6.3 The EOC Planner should be familiar with best practices for continuity of operations and incorporate these practices into EOC planning.

6.6.4 The EOC Planner should be familiar with the entity's emergency operations plans and the organizational structure used by the EOC team.

6.7 The EOC Coordinator is activated as part of the EOC team, usually as part of the EOC's Managers staff, with responsibility for coordinating support to the EOC team and managing the facility during activation of the EOC.

6.7.1 The responsibility granted to the EOC Coordinator position may vary greatly from one EOC to another, and should be clearly defined by the authority having jurisdiction and documented appropriately (for example, plans, policies, delegation authority, etc.).

6.7.2 The EOC coordinator should be familiar with the entity's emergency operations plans and the organizational structure used by the EOC team.

6.7.3 The EOC Coordinator should have access to the various plans, documents, records, supplies, communications, and other tools used by the EOC team during activation.

6.8 The EOC Planner or the EOC Coordinator, or both, may need additional staff to support their activities. Sources for such support staff may include trained volunteers. The type, complexity, and length of the incident will help determine increases and decreases in the need for EOC staff.

7. Pre-Activation Responsibilities

NOTE 1—The following are the primary responsibilities of the EOC Planner. The EOC Planner does not necessarily need to perform or directly oversee these responsibilities. He or she should ensure that these responsibilities are performed and integrated with each other.

7.1 *Operational Planning*—Operational planning for the EOC team may or may not be part of the direct duties of the EOC Planner. However, it is critical that the layout and systems of the EOC be configured to support the incident management system used by the team. Consequently, the EOC Planner must be familiar with the incident management system and the relationships between various organizational elements under the system.

7.2 *Financial Authorities*—The EOC Planner should identify any legal authorities that allow for access to emergency funding or waive normal business requirements such as the elimination of the need for competitive bidding. There may also be the need to establish special financial accounts or cost codes, or both, at the time of activation to track operational costs. The EOC Planner should ensure that mechanisms to implement these authorities and track costs have been established, coordinated with operational planners, and are available to the EOC Coordinator upon activation.

7.3 *Technical Planning*—While most of this function is performed during development of the EOC, there is a continuing need to upgrade, integrate, replace, or add new equipment and systems. New systems have the potential to cause technical problems within the EOC if not properly planned for and integrated. This is particularly true of information technology and communications systems. New systems may also have an impact on related inventory, such as different printer cartridges being needed for new printers or updates being performed on cache computers. There may also be a need for new or modified service and maintenance agreements.

7.4 *Maintenance and Repair Program*—Many EOC systems require regular testing and maintenance to remain mission capable. There should be a formal program to address these needs and any equipment in inventory. This program should include 24-h emergency contact information for those who provide these services. Some equipment, such as amateur radio, require specialized licenses for testing.

7.5 *Facility Services*—The EOC requires support services such as utilities, janitorial and security. For example, janitors usually clean in the evening after hours. In a 24-h operation, this one-time cleaning may not be sufficient and standard cleaning may be disruptive to operations. EOC contracts should have provisions specifying how service is to be provided during activation. These services should be capable of being modified during activation of the EOC. Modifications to EOC contracts can be preplanned as emergency clauses in contracts or may be setup as standby contracts.

7.6 *Facility Use Scheduling*—When an EOC is activated in a multi-use facility, specific areas will be re-designated from their normal use for EOC operations or support functions. Daily schedules must be able to be rapidly changed to accommodate EOC activation. Schedules should be accessible and provide 24-h contact information to cancel or relocate pre-planned events.

7.7 *Supplies Management*—While initial stocked supplies should be available for 72 h or more, a surge of personnel may use supplies faster than anticipated. A plan should be in place to inventory and coordinate resupply during activation and to restock in the post-activation phase. This would include items such as stored water and rations, equipment and parts, and sanitary, medical, office, and laundry supplies. Items with a shelf life need to be monitored and replaced when expired.

7.7.1 Storage site selection should consider, at minimum, incident vulnerability, ease of access from the EOC, any backup for power as needed, and site security.

7.7.2 Some items, such as generator fuel, may require separate storage for safety. Others, such as rations, may require special storage that meets local health regulations for temperature and pest control.

7.7.3 The plan should include resource lists, memoranda of understanding (or agreement), or standby contracts with suppliers to purchase items at fixed prices.

7.7.4 The plan should establish a process for anticipating demand, monitoring stock levels, and ordering supplies. Consider that the standard practice of maintaining minimum stocks and relying on just-in-time delivery could be affected by damage to the transportation infrastructure following a disaster.

7.7.5 The plan should identify a restocking strategy, such as first in, first out (FIFO) and identify minimum stock levels and reorder points. The supplies inventory should include items to support potential operational requirements, such as a need to shelter and feed the EOC team. Consider the potential for a rapid expansion of EOC personnel.

7.7.6 Develop a plan to use shelf life items to cycle them when feasible, such as emergency rations being routinely used by the EOC night shift or provided as meals during training.

7.7.7 The supplies management plan in a multi-use facility should also be coordinated with other tenants at that facility to

provide potential shelter-in-place support for non-EOC staff who may be unable to leave the facility.

7.7.8 This plan should take into consideration any additional supplies that may be needed to relocate the EOC under a continuity of operations plan (COOP).

7.8 *Documentation*—A basic assumption in EOC planning is that there will be members of the EOC team who have not been in the EOC before or received training in their job functions. It is essential, therefore, to provide written documentation to support EOC activities. Documentation should address both administrative and operational requirements.

7.8.1 *EOC Support Manual*—The EOC Support Manual is a handbook provided to EOC personnel to assist them in using the EOC systems and processes. It primarily addresses administrative, logistical, and facility management issues. It is the primary reference document for the EOC Coordinator. Suggested contents for the EOC Support Manual can be found in Section 9.

7.8.2 *EOC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or Guidelines (SOG)*—The EOC SOP or SOG principally addresses operational issues. Many of the routine tasks involved in activating, operating, and deactivating the EOC can be standardized, allowing any member of the EOC team to quickly perform routine tasks.

7.8.3 *Reference Material*—Reference material consists of copies of critical documents that might be needed during activation.

7.8.3.1 This may include emergency plans, current contact information, maps, standard operating procedures, incident documentation forms, check lists, etc. The EOC Planner should maintain an inventory list of these documents and ensure that they are kept current.

7.8.3.2 In addition to documents related to operational activities, the EOC Planner should identify documents that will be needed by the EOC Coordinator, such as copies of standby contracts, delegations of authorities, vendor contact lists, etc. and make sure these are readily available during activation.

7.9 *Facility Management*—Where the EOC Planner is responsible for overall planning of EOC management functions, the direct responsibility for the EOC’s physical plant is usually handled by a facility manager. This position may or may not be directly associated with the authority having jurisdiction over the EOC and may even be a contractor position. It is also not uncommon to find the functions associated with this position distributed among multiple agencies or departments. Consequently, the EOC Planner will need to determine how these functions will be performed, even if the facility manager is not available. The EOC Planner should develop the following references and make them available to the EOC Coordinator:

7.9.1 A current contact list for facility management personnel and 24-h contact information for other nearby operations, businesses, buildings, etc., that may need to be contacted in an emergency.

7.9.2 Current 24-h contact information for services, maintenance, and repair. Critical services may include:

- (1) Janitorial
- (2) Sanitation

- (3) Maintenance and Repair
- (4) Communications and IT equipment vendor support
- (5) Security
- (6) Supply procurement
- (7) Feeding
- (8) Lodging/sheltering of staff

7.9.3 Current copies of all site structural drawings, diagrams of critical facility systems, equipment manuals, etc. Critical EOC systems include:

- (1) Environmental
- (2) Life Safety
- (3) Utilities (for example, electrical, sewage, water, etc.)
- (4) Communications.

7.10 The EOC Planner must be aware of the operational area emergency operations plan (EOP) and revisions that may dictate changes to the layout or procedures in the EOC. These changes might include a need to adjust the EOC layout, provide additional equipment, increase supplies, make changes in manuals, documentation and training, etc. Changes may also affect the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and potential relocation of the EOC.

8. Activation Responsibilities

8.1 *Services*—The principal difference between an EOC and a normal office building is the need to immediately ramp up from routine functions to a potential 24-h sustained operation. This means that the service and support provided during day-to-day operations may be insufficient and need to be modified. For this reason, the EOC Coordinator should either have the authority to modify or enter into contracts for EOC services during activation immediate access to people having this authority.

8.1.1 Contracted services such as janitorial services may need to be increased or curtailed depending on operational requirements.

8.1.2 EOC operations will most likely generate a greater quantity of waste than is normally handled through recycling or other disposal methods. Some of this waste may include documents that require secure disposal procedures not normally used in day-to-day operations.

8.1.3 Consider negotiating service agreements with the appropriate critical communication and IT equipment/systems vendors for priority support during an emergency activation.

8.1.4 Demands on the security staff will increase and will most likely require additional personnel. These demands may include:

8.1.4.1 Increased patrols or static posts to secure additional areas of the facility such as secure areas, parking lots, or garages.

8.1.4.2 Increased support to access control to accommodate an influx of EOC team members and to process new personnel who require access.

8.1.4.3 Ensuring any occupants and visitors who are not part of the EOC team leave the facility.

8.1.4.4 Providing escort to personnel such as dignitaries, vendors, media pool reporters, etc. who have a legitimate reason for entry and have been approved for escorted access.

8.1.4.5 Implementing operational security (OPSEC) policies and procedures.

8.1.5 *Meal Plan*—Full activation will require feeding the EOC team. This can be done through the use of outside caterers, non-profit organizations, on-site food preparation, or emergency rations.

8.1.5.1 If the plan calls for on-site food preparation, consider special dietary needs, health and nutrition standards, and local ordinances governing the storing and handling of food.

8.1.5.2 The EOC feeding plan should make provision for serving items such as paper plates, utensils, etc. and for the disposal of trash and the disposition of leftovers.

8.1.5.3 Consider contacting local food vendors and non-profit agencies to determine if they could provide prepared food during activation. A list of food vendors capable of providing meals during activation should be developed and verified regularly for accuracy.

8.1.5.4 Consideration should be given to the possibility that food suppliers may be unavailable and that emergency rations may be needed instead.

8.1.5.5 Drinking water should always be available. An alternate water source should be identified in the event of the normal water source being contaminated or unavailable. Stored water should be cycled periodically to stay fresh.

9. Documentation

9.1 *EOC Support Manual*—The EOC Support Manual is an administrative handbook provided to EOC team members to assist them in using the EOC systems and processes. Many of the basic administrative or logistical tasks that support the EOC team can be standardized and incorporated into guides and checklists. These documents should be based on the assumption that the person reading them is in the EOC for the first time and may not be familiar with the facility or any systems or management processes. The EOC Support Manual also serves as a principal reference for the EOC Coordinator. The manual should be supplemented by additional material for this purpose, such as standby contracts, copies of regulations or fiscal procedures, checklists, etc.

9.1.1 The following elements should be included in the EOC Support Manual:

9.1.1.1 *Procedure for EOC Set-Up*—Do not assume that the first people to arrive at the EOC know how to set it up for operations. This is particularly true of a multi-use facility where the first arrivals have to convert the facility from its routine use to its EOC configuration. Even a standing EOC may need to have certain systems turned on or switched from standby to operational mode.

9.1.1.2 Emergency medical information such as the location of first aid kits, defibrillators, etc. and the procedure for dealing with medical emergencies.

9.1.1.3 Fire safety information such as the location of fire extinguishers, hoses, etc. and evacuation routes and procedures.

9.1.1.4 Facility access requirements such as the location of keys or access codes. Identify any processes for adjusting levels of security in different parts of the facility.

9.1.1.5 A facility set-up checklist identifying systems and equipment to be turned on and the location and set-up for other support items such as flipcharts, office supplies, etc.

9.1.1.6 An EOC floor plan to assist in setting up the facility.

9.1.1.7 The process for notifying other tenants or users that the EOC has been activated.

9.1.1.8 A list of vendors, suppliers, and service providers who provide EOC support, with 24-h contact information.

9.1.1.9 Procedures for establishing communications, including both procedures for setting up the equipment and for establishing contact with other agencies and organizations. This should include a plan and related SOP for emergency radio communications provided by qualified and licensed amateur radio operators.

9.1.1.10 A facility map or site map, or both, indicating the location of parking and various access/exit points, restricted access areas, restrooms, break and meal areas, and other pertinent location information such as the location of emergency equipment and supplies and utility shut-offs.

9.1.1.11 Procedures for requesting supplies and services to support EOC operations.

9.1.1.12 Technical information providing step-by-step instructions for operating EOC equipment and systems. The following are examples of this type of information:

(1) Process for setting up a password and logging into a computer workstation.

(2) Process for sending or receiving faxes.

(3) Process for directing documents to specific printers.

(4) Process for reporting repair needs.

(5) Process for ordering supplies and equipment.

(6) Process for transferring calls.

9.2 *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or Guidelines (SOG)*—Where the EOC Support Manual addresses administrative and logistical issues, Standard Operating Procedures or Guidelines provide guidance on operational issues. However, since activation and demobilization provide the link between routine daily activity and full EOC operations, these two processes are addressed in this guide. Many of the routine tasks involved in activating and demobilizing the EOC can be standardized, allowing new personnel to quickly perform routine tasks.

9.2.1 *EOC Activation:*

9.2.1.1 *Authority*—Identify who has the authority to activate the EOC. This authority should be defined by title rather than by name.

9.2.1.2 *Conditions for Activation*—Identify the conditions under which the EOC may be activated.

9.2.1.3 *Notifying the EOC Team*—Identify the processes available for notifying members of the EOC team to report for duty and the steps for implementation.

9.2.1.4 *Jurisdictional Notifications*—Identify the agencies, organizations, administrative authorities, school districts, and other positions or individuals who should be notified that the EOC has been activated. Identify the notification options and how to implement each option.

9.2.1.5 *Activation of Incident-Prioritized Communications*—Special communications assets such as specially trained amateur radio, prioritized cell phone service, etc. may be activated. Indicate the triggers and the process for activation.

9.2.1.6 *Activation of Stand-By Contracts*—Certain contracts for goods and services may need to be activated. Indicate what conditions would trigger those changes and how to implement them.

9.2.2 *EOC Demobilization:*

9.2.2.1 Once operations are concluded, there are things that need to be done to close out the current operation and prepare the facility for future operations. Important tasks can be overlooked without a detailed deactivation process. The following elements, at a minimum, should be addressed and documented:

- (1) Process for making the decision to close the EOC.
- (2) Process for notifying facility management, operational, and support agencies about the closure.
- (3) Process for returning services such as janitorial and security to non-active EOC status.
- (4) Process for deactivating any incident-prioritized communications service.
- (5) Tasks and assignments for activities such as archiving files, preparing after action reports and lessons learned information, and transitioning active operations.
- (6) Tasks and assignments for facility-related activities such as clean up, repairing or performing maintenance on equipment, reordering supplies, etc.
- (7) Process for reviewing the management of the EOC to identify areas where improvement can be made, then implementing change as is feasible.

10. Training, Tests, and Exercises

10.1 EOC team members should receive training to perform their assigned functions at least annually, and this training should be evaluated through regular exercises.

10.2 Consider providing training on subjects that may affect team members’ performance during activation (for example, family preparedness, pre-deployment preparations, etc.).

10.3 Team members should have training, as needed, on subjects such as computer systems and applications, policy, evacuation, sheltering in place, and operations manuals, in addition to meeting other requirements more specific to their assigned roles.

10.4 The EOC team should receive training not only on incident management but on EOC systems and procedures as well. The EOC Planner should develop appropriate training for

the EOC team giving particular thought to “just-in-time” training based on the EOC Support Manual and SOP or SOG and should integrate EOC management into any EOC exercises.

10.5 EOC exercises tend to focus on response operations rather than EOC management functions. However, since these management functions are integral to successful operations, it is easy to build in training objectives that can assess how well these management functions support the EOC team. Examples of areas that can be assessed are:

- (1) Notification procedures
- (2) Access control
- (3) Integrating a new partner into IT and communications systems
- (4) Checklist usability for complex processes
- (5) Logistics processes
- (6) Feeding operations

10.6 It is also possible to develop exercise objectives that test facility management as well. Examples include:

- (1) Operating on emergency systems or battery backup.
- (2) Deliberately failing primary systems to assess the ability to switch to parallel systems.
- (3) Setting up and operating at a different location from the primary EOC to exercise the continuity of operations plan (COOP).

11. Summary

11.1 The following are key points to consider when planning for EOC management:

- 11.1.1 Identify a lead person with overall responsibility for EOC management planning.
- 11.1.2 Develop standard operating procedures for common EOC functions.
- 11.1.3 Develop standby contracts for increased or additional services.
- 11.1.4 Coordinate supporting operations such as security and support services.
- 11.1.5 Establish an inventory and resupply process for supplies, meals, water, etc.
- 11.1.6 During activation, consider forming an EOC support team under a single coordinator.
- 11.1.7 Use a standard deactivation process that prepares the EOC for immediate reactivation before concluding operations.

12. Keywords

12.1 emergency operations centers; EOC; EOC coordination; EOC Coordinator; EOC facility management; EOC operational management; EOC Planner; EOC planning; EOC Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

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