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# Generic Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government Plan for State-Level Transportation Agencies

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MTI Project: I080

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MTI staff was retained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to review and revise their Continuity of Operations/ Continuity of Government (COOP/COG) Plan to conform to the latest federal guidance. As a result of that partnership the MTI researchers developed a *Generic COOP COG Plan* for state-level transportation agencies (State DOTs).

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## Study Methods

MTI researchers reviewed the existing Caltrans plan and benchmarked it against the requirements of the FEMA COOP/COG guidance documents. They reviewed COOP/COG Plans for other states and for federal entities. They conducted a literature review, expert interviews, and piloted drafts of plan elements with experienced Caltrans employees. They delivered revised segments of the Caltrans COOP/COG Plan for review by Caltrans executive leadership. At the end of the two-year project the MTI researchers submitted the final draft of the completely revised COOP/COG Plan for circulation to Caltrans executives for final review and approval, which is pending the appointment of a permanent Director.

## Findings

New federal guidance required a significant revision of the essential functions for a State DOT, including matching them to categories of federal essential functions. Additional alternate continuity facilities had to be identified. Vital records definitions were updated to match the new COOP/COG Plan requirements. A structure had to be developed to deliver the specified essential functions.

The federal guidance did not discuss how to integrate the work of the COOP/COG Plan and the Emergency Operations Plan. The researchers recommended making COOP/COG a branch of the Management Section in the State DOT emergency operations center (EOC).

Because Caltrans had not completed its review and internal approval process for the COOP/COG plan revisions, the researchers determined to create a separate document that represented their findings and best practices for the implementation of the COOP/COG services and functions.

*The Generic COOP/COG Plan* is a template that contains examples of all the elements required by FEMA guidance documents. *The Generic Plan* can be obtained as a Word document to facilitate



Emergency Preparedness Kit



adoption of a new COOP/COG Plan by State DOTs.

## Policy Recommendations

State DOTs should review the latest FEMA guidance circulars and revise their COOP/COG Plans to comply with the new requirements for the identification of essential functions, and the matching of state essential functions with the categories of federal essential functions.

The federal government should add an independent study course that addresses the relationship between emergency management and COOP/COG, and brings ICS into the EOC, coordinating the work of the two plans through the EOC Management Section.

## About the Authors

### Frances L. Edwards, MUP, PhD, CEM

Dr. Edwards, Deputy Director of MTI's National Transportation Security Center of Excellence, teaches emergency management in the MTI MSTM program. She is also professor of political science and director of the MPA program at San José State University. She has twenty-two years of experience in local government emergency management.

### Daniel C. Goodrich, MPA, CEM

Mr. Goodrich is a research associate at MTI, where he also teaches security for transportation managers in the MSTM program. He has been in the USMC Security Forces, and has worked in emergency management organizations in city, county and private organizations.

Edwards and Goodrich are the authors of a number of other MTI reports, most recently the COOP COG Handbook for State-Level Transportation Agencies.

### William M. Medigovich, MA

Following a distinguished 45-year career of public service in state and federal agencies, Col. Medigovich is now a research associate at MTI. He has work in military and civilian intelligence agencies, and was director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services in California; director of FEMA Region IX; and retired from federal service as the Director of the Office of Emergency Transportation within the U.S. Department of Transportation.

## To Learn More

For more details about the study,  
[transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1080.html](http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1080.html)



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