

# THE COORDINATOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE REGIONAL MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION SYSTEM

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## From the Out-Going Chair, Regional Multi-Agency Coordination System Development Project Task Force

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It kicks off with a phone call. County emergency managers and senior agency administrators discuss the need for enhanced regional coordination due to a complex incident in the Portland metropolitan region. Does a county EOC need assistance? Are impacts to multiple counties necessitating a more cohesive approach to public information dissemination, resource identification, and/or policy coordination? The Regional Multi-Agency Coordination System (RMACS) Development Project Task Force, with considerable input from stakeholders, has

wrestled with defining regional approaches to address these questions, and more, for the past eight years. Its conclusions, in the form of a scalable system and framework, are described in the recently revised RMACS Concept of Operations Plan ([click here](#)).

Welcome to this issue of “The Coordinator.” Phase III of the RMACS development project, which commenced in mid-2016, is in its final months of implementation. We have much news to share about our work in 2017, and what’s ahead in 2018.

Phase III of building the Regional Multi-Agency Coordination System (RMACS) was guided by the RMACS Task Force and funded with \$75K in UASI FY15 funds and \$13K from Metro, a RDPO core contributing partner. It was designed to:

- 1) **Update the 2014 RMACS ConOps Plan and the 2015 RMAC-Group Handbook;**
- 2) **Offer ICS and MAC courses to enhance the knowledge and skills of RMACS stakeholders;**
- 3) **Continue to build skills as well as strengthen interconnections between key components of the RMACS including the RMAC Group, the Health-Medical MAC Group, the Joint Information System, the Animal MAC Group, and the Regional Logistics Support Team;**
- 4) **Provide RMACS orientation workshops to county EOC staff to ensure their understanding of the RMACS and its tools, and know how to plug into the system when one or more components are needed during disasters; and**
- 5) **Resolve resource ordering issues that have challenged the region for years.**

### A Year of Change to Enhance the RMACS and Its Sustainability

In February 2017, directors of emergency management (‘Emergency Managers Group’ - EMG) from the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization’s (RDPO) five counties and the City of Portland met and agreed, *among other*

**What is the RMACS?** The Regional MACS is a combination of facilities, people, organizational structures, and processes that extends across county boundaries within the Portland Metropolitan Region. It links components of existing county-level coordination systems into regional and state processes.

#### Why have an RMACS?

- Support heavily impacted counties
- Enhance cross-county coordination
- Mitigate conflicting policies and messages
- Provide a coordination point for regional entities
- Achieve regionally-oriented situation status
- Establish a standardized approach to regional incident prioritization
- Offer a mechanism for scarce resource allocation

*things*, to scale back the size and composition of the Regional MAC Group (often called the “Big MAC” -- intended to be multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary). The original RMACS Concept of Operation was to train and maintain a pool of ~ 30 RMAC Group members from the five counties and several discipline groups. When stood up, the RMAC Group would consist of six to ten members.

The EMG determined that the size of the RMAC Group pool was unsustainable. They also realized that standing up such a large RMAC Group during an incident could pose some challenges to efficient decision-making, especially given that not all discipline group representatives would be able to a secure delegation of authority to make decisions on behalf of counterpart agencies in the region.

The **RMACS ConOps Plan, December 2017 Update** ([click here](#)), reflects a pared down version of the RMAC Group; the core group

will now consist of senior executive (non-elected) county representatives but may expand based upon need. These agency representatives (**AREP**) must be recognized as having sufficient authority and the ability to weigh multi-jurisdictional and multidisciplinary policy implications with input from regional stakeholders of the MACS serving as subject matter experts (SMEs). In addition to this organizational change, counties will no longer recruit a pool of 30 RMAC Group members, but will instead maintain 2-3 members each (i.e. a pool of 10 – 15).

The EMG, with concurrence of the RDPO Steering Committee, also decided (based on sustainability needs) to no longer offer contracted ICS and MAC training sessions to RMACS stakeholders in future project phases. This decision prompted the RMACS Task Force to revise the current project to allow our current contractor, Organizational Quality Associates (OQA), to develop a **Just-in Time training package** for the RMACS Planning Section that Regional MAC (RMAC) Coordinators will deliver. The Regional EOC Training Sub-Committee of REMTEC, the Emergency Management Work Group of the RDPO, will review how some of these courses could be provided by counties and cities that have training programs, or by state or federal agencies.

### Phase IV Launch

As the RMACS begins to transition to Phase IV, set to begin this summer, the RDPO Steering Committee approved a new management model and decommissioned the RMACS Task Force in January 2018 (see last page for a vote of thanks). The System’s new management model consists of three RMAC Group Coordinators serving as project managers and the emergency management directors of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties serving as advisors.

The three RMAC Group Coordinators – RDPO Manager Denise Barrett, NW Oregon Health Preparedness Organization Program Manager Kathryn Richer, and Cities Readiness Initiative Program Coordinator Adrienne Donner – are now designated as the RMACS Project Management Team. Their charge is to develop and execute the RMACS Work Plan. This includes delivering Just-In-Time training for Planning Section RMACS support staff, other discipline and functional components and support organization staff; delivering workshops and exercises for the RMAC and Health/Medical MAC Groups; and communicating project progress to RDPO/RMACS stakeholders. The Emergency Managers Group will approve the Work Plan, monitor project implementation, and provide guidance to the coordinators when needed.

### Major Regional Elements within the RMACS

- County ECCs/EOCs
- Discipline-specific MAC Groups (e.g., Health-Medical and Animal Services).
- Regional Joint Information Center
- Regional Logistics Support Team (RLST)
- SW Washington Regional IV MAC Group.
- Regional Agencies (e.g., hospital systems, Port of Portland, utility providers)
- Regional MAC Group
- Regional MAC Support Organization

The RDPO Steering Committee awarded a \$25K UASI FY17 grant to support the RMACS Project Management Team. This will pay for an 18-month consultancy to support execution of Phase IV RMACS workshops and exercises, and provide technical support to the RMAC Group Coordinators. It is envisioned that components of the RMACS will be exercised in June 2019 during the region's full-scale Portland Area Capabilities Exercise (PACE).

In December 2017, RMACS Task Force members, Scott Porter, Nancy Bush, and Kathryn Richer, met with Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) Director Andrew Phelps and gained his conditional acceptance of the RMACS ConOps Plan. Before giving full acceptance, he said would like members of his staff to participate in an RMACS tabletop exercise. **Director Phelps supported, in principle, elements of the regional resource ordering approach in the Plan**, pending clarification on how it impacts OEM. These elements include:

- Regional entities can place orders through the County EOC/ECC in the County where the entity's headquarters is located (including those that are not hospitals).
- These orders may include delivery to a location in another Oregon county within the region where the regional entity has operations needing resources.
- Regional entities would maintain records on the "back end" to track the location of fulfilled orders and expenses related to those orders.
- The recipient of resources is financially responsible for the ordered items (not the county ordering on behalf of the recipient)

Director Phelps indicated that a written agreement between cities and counties *is not* needed for regional entities to order directly from the County ECC/EOC.

#### 2017 RMACS Phase III Major Project Accomplishments:

- Updated the RMACS ConOps Plan
- Updated the RMAC Group and Support Organization Handbook (95% complete)
- Delivered RMACS Orientation slide deck for EOCs, and three orientations
- Trained 98 RMACS stakeholders via ICS-300, ICS-400 and the Planning P course deliveries
- Transitioned RMACS management from RMACS Task Force to RMAC Group Coordinator model

#### 2018 Work Plan to Complete by May 2018:

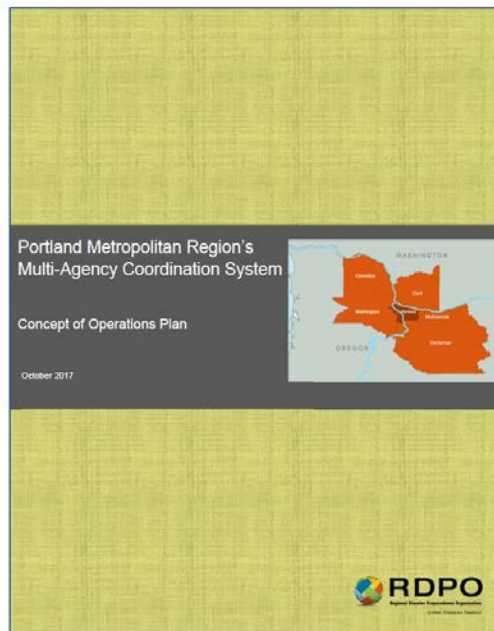
RMAC Group and Support Organization Handbook – final edits  
*by February*

Deliver final M-480 Course - *April 11, 2018*

Deliver Health-Medical MAC Group TTX *in April\**

Deliver RMAC Group Workshop and TTX *in May\**

*\*Date will be selected through Doodle Poll of group members*



#### Thanks to those actively involved in the RMACS Task Force and Consultant Team 2017

David Gassaway (Chair), Washington County Emergency Management  
Nancy Bush, Clackamas County Disaster Management  
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Chris Voss, Multnomah County Emergency Management  
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