

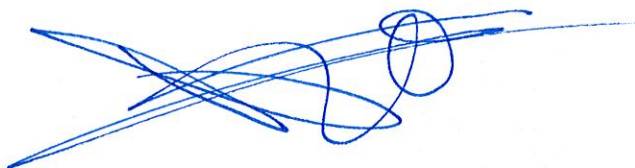


**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRES
POLICY DOCUMENT**

November, 2013

AUTHORITY

This Policy is authorised by the State Emergency Operations Controller to provide direction and guidance in relation to Emergency Operations Centres.



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Deputy Commissioner (Field), NSWPF
State Emergency Operations Controller

Date 1/11/13.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Version	Date	Comment
1.0		Original Version
1.0 Amended	September 2013	Reflect changes to SERM Act which changed Districts to Regions in their various usages and to change reference to Displan to EMPLAN.
2.0	November 2013	Review of Policy

ANNEXURE 1 – EOC LAYOUT GUIDELINES

Physical Facility

The Emergency Operations Controller must ensure that any facility identified as a possible EOC is capable of complying with Occupational Health and Safety legislation and regulations. Consideration should be given to ensuring adequate facilities are available..

Physical Resources

The physical resources required to support operations in an EOC include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Display Boards eg. White boards/SMART boards/display boards
- b. Stationery
- c. Computers
- d. Audio / visual equipment
- e. Plans and Manuals
- f. Printers/Scanners (Black/White and Colour)

Communications Systems

An EOC is a centre of communication which provides the ability to communicate and confer between individuals and agencies involved in an emergency operation.

Communications systems and processes are used to support the primary business needs of an EOC. These include:

Telecommunication (Landline & Facsimile)

Telecommunications systems are better serviced if operated through direct exchange connection (Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN)) rather than through individual agency switchboard systems. When planning for the deployment of PSTN telecommunications lines ensure that ADSL (internet) and facsimile machines (where required) are allocated a dedicated line first, the remaining lines may then be deployed for voice communications.

Internet Connectivity

This requires high capacity download rates as well as multiple data capability such as broadband over ADSL or optic fibre. Dial-up connections, which should be avoided, reduce capability and efficiency through download time delays and time-out errors.

Email

Managing information electronically should be independent of personal identity and be able to transcend shift changes or personnel availability. Implementation of a range of generic email addresses that have access permissions and auto forwards allows for information management and security principles to be applied more efficiently.

Ideally email facilities should be available to a multitude of agencies and not limited to those from any particular agency, specifically, any email addresses established should be for generic positions such as the EOCON, EMO, media or the EOC itself. Further, having email addresses accessible through a web-based browser allows users to be able to access such emails without being

connected through any agency system and allows for redundancy if the EOC needs to change locations.

Geographic Information Systems

GIS data provides operational information layers and graphical display of information. It is a capability that provides better ability to analyse information when data is available. This capability does require suitable resources to ensure it is utilised to its fullest, such as :

- a. Plotter / A3 Colour Printer
- b. Dedicated GIS computer/s and software

Workplace Design

In the past, Emergency Operations Centre designs and layouts have been developed by less than idealistic constraints and concerns. The size and shape of space that is available has influenced the EOC layout and therefore its ability to implement business needs and execute responsibilities.

EOC layouts can be described in terms of a few basic layouts or designs which afford cohesion to the coordination or management principles of such centres. Whichever design is constructed, it should ensure that it enhances the principles of communication flow and the ability to facilitate command and control as well as support functions.

Internationally, layout designs are built around numerous profiles, all specifically created to influence the communication and control elements played out in an EOC as required by the governing agency.

1. Boardroom

Centre staff amass around a single table, u-shaped or oval-shaped assembly of workstations. The focus of this layout is with participants facing towards each other for enhancement of communication and direct interaction.

This layout is specifically suited to small management teams with the control element located within the boardroom layout or within close proximity.

Access and visibility to displays restricted to direct forward display for sections of the management team or where movement of participants is required for complete information appreciation.

This layout is predominately used in areas with limited space or are for other administrative functions of an organisation to which an Emergency Operations Centre utilise the space through default due to limited options. This layout historically supports a paper based communication and management system.

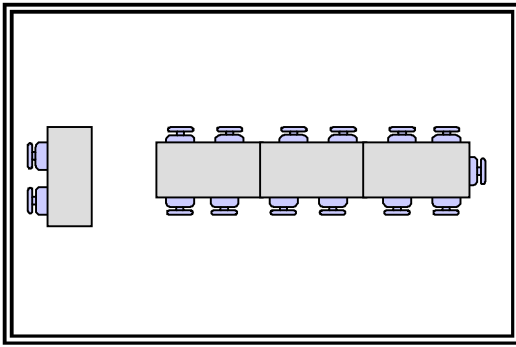


Fig 1: Boardroom Example 1

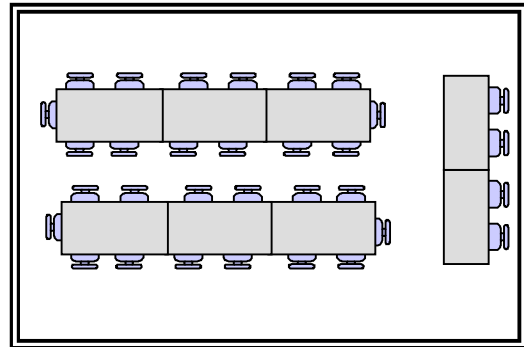


Fig 2: Boardroom Example 2

Strengths

As a layout for the purpose of ensuring collaboration through discussion and interactions, it forces the focus onto the information sharing and team focus on solution finding.

The control element is part of the integrated layout but can be reinforced through continued presence and participation.

Weaknesses

The layout allows little tolerance for the management of conversational space or privacy. The constant exposure to noise, imposition on personal space and shared desk areas can lead to not only physical discomfort but also distraction to productive mental processing.

2. Stadium

Staff are located along the walls, forming an outer ring facing inward toward the table. The central open area is sometimes the central point for information display or management and affords a more ‘friendly’ environment to modular/focused discussions or task orientated groups.

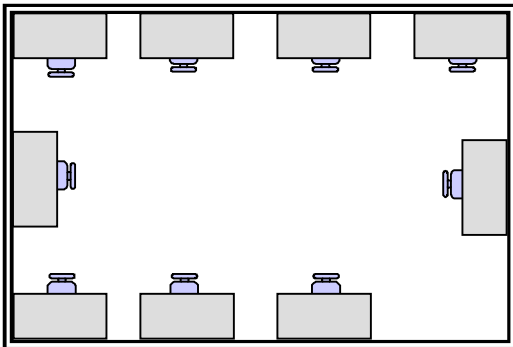


Fig 3: Stadium Example 1

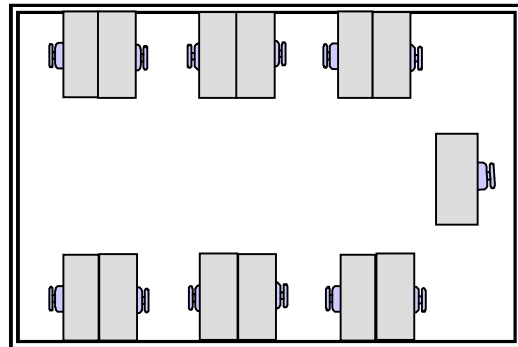


Fig 4: Stadium Example 2

Strengths

The ability for tasking for solution finding and collaboration for task actions can be better facilitated while also affording some privacy and noise control through distancing.

Weaknesses

The layout allows little consolidation of effort and larger team collaboration is harder to facilitate. The special environment that this type of layout is set up in often means that staff creates 'silos' in which they work.

When this layout is used as a default, with specific tables allocated to agencies or functional areas, there is a tendency for liaison officers at those tables to unconsciously have expectation of others to move to them rather than consolidate discussion and solution finding groups.

3. Mission Control

This model lends itself to a more comparative style of information management based around technology as the key transfer and visual mediums utilised. This is due to the effect monitors have on blocking forward communications across a room and directs staff to sideways communications. Staff are located in rows and module style side-by-side facing toward an area accommodating visual displays for generic information sharing.

The direction of the curved model can also influence the sense of focus bearing external output versus inter-personal collaboration. This model, more appropriate for technological based information management, needs to also be supported by appropriate space and area that encompass multiple personnel gatherings in an arena that encourages discussion.

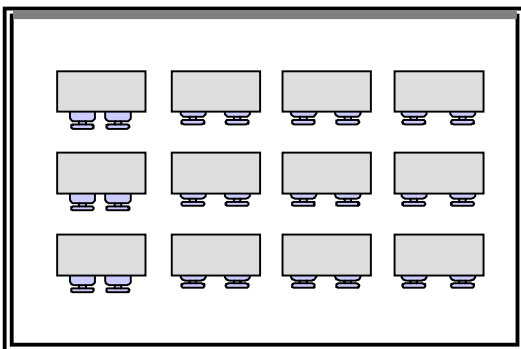


Fig 5: Mission Control Example 1

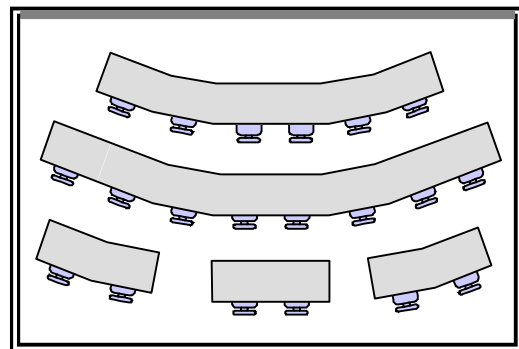


Fig 6: Mission Control Example 2

Strengths

As a layout for the purpose of 'monitoring', it forces the focus onto the information collection and display.

The control element is part of the integrated layout but can be reinforced through obligatory withdrawal for briefings and modular discussions.

Weaknesses

The tendency of staff, located in this layout, is to interact less by face-to-face and have more reliance upon the technology to communicate information.

This can lead to singular intellectual processing of information that the decision making process is based on rather than collaborative or team processing and analysis.

This layout exemplifies the tactical or tasked based actions related to information and less on the collaborative approach for planning and problem solving.

The tendency may be for the display of information to override the overall analysis and integration of the information into the decision making process. Due to this a strong control function needs to ensure collaboration, analysis and validation of information to ensure it is incorporated into the decision making process rather than dictating to it.

4. Marketplace

The marketplace model is basically a collection of small Boardroom-style tables scattered across a large space. Each table has a specialized function, and coordination is accomplished by communicating (frequently by getting up and walking) between tables.

This allows workgroup dynamics to be utilised with the decision makers defining management by physical movement around the space/area. It and also lends itself to collaboration of personnel as well as between workgroups

The layout can compliment both paper based and electronic mediums which creates versatility
This layout has similar strengths and weakness to the Stadium layout.

5. Bulls Eye

The Bull's Eye model elaborates the Boardroom design with more extensive staff support at tables laid out in an approximation of concentric circles around the main table. Each staff section is seated behind their representatives at the main table.

The Bulls Eye model takes a lot of floor space and the use of visual displays must be afforded duplicity for ease of visual capture.

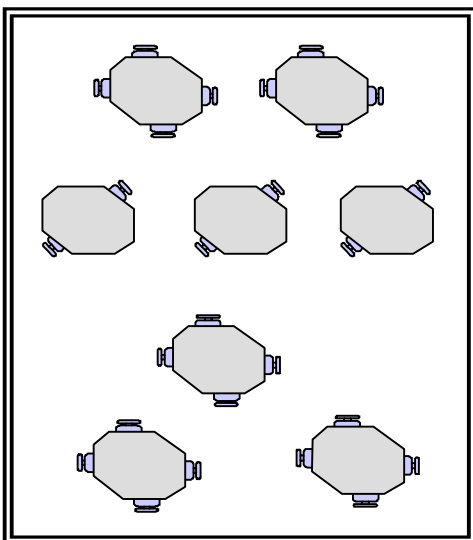


Fig 7: Marketplace Example

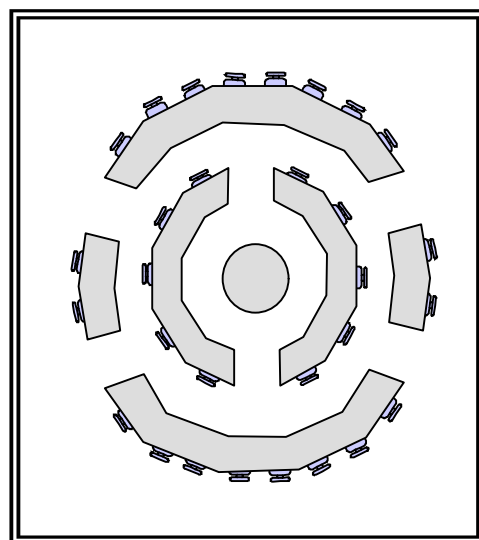


Fig: Bulls Eye example

6. Integrated

The Integrated model utilises the reality of the restrictions posed for most emergency managers in New South Wales - the availability of personnel to physically locate at an EOC.

Telephone, computer and video conferencing by staff contribute to the virtual location of an EOC. These arrangements are not considered ideal by default but do allow and recognise the difficulty

in supporting the staffing of a centre in often time critical environments or with restriction of movement of staff due to access issues.

Integrated layouts should be included into any of the other layout options as a contingency for business continuity in adverse constraints, providing the ability to:

- a. Ensure participation of all necessary parties into the makeup of the Emergency Operations Centre team.
- b. Potential to include Site Controllers, other Emergency Operations Centres and Agency Headquarters directly in discussions and briefings.
- c. Allow a more phased process of staff participation for activation and closure.

ANNEXURE 2 – EOC OPERATIONAL READINESS AUDIT TEMPLATE

EOC OPERATIONAL READINESS AUDIT REPORT

Location :

Month / Year

Conducted By :

RESOURCE / ISSUE	INDICATOR	✓ or x	COMMENT
Availability and access	Immediate access available on a 24 hour basis.		
	Key holder details confirmed.		
Alternate EOC	Alternate facility identified.		
Audio Visual equipment	Commercial and/or Subscription Television available.		
	Commercial Radio available.		
	Data Projector available.		
	Smart Boards available.		
Back Up power	Emergency generator available.		
	UPS attached to computers.		
Bathroom facilities	Toilets and washing available.		
Clock	24 hours clock clearly visible to all within EOC.		
Communications devices	Appropriate number of telephones handset available.		
	Facsimile available.		
Contact lists	Current and located within EOC.		
EOC SOPs	Current and located within EOC.		
Furniture	Quantities adequate for expected personnel numbers.		
	In good and working condition.		
Information Technology	Appropriate number of computers available.		
	Printer network available.		
	Internet and email connectivity available and tested.		
	Photocopier available.		
Kitchen facilities	Kitchen area offering refrigeration, light meal cooking and		

RESOURCE / ISSUE	INDICATOR	✓ or x	COMMENT
	tea/coffee facilities available.		
Maps & GeoSpatial	Large laminated map/s of Local Government Area(s) available.		
	Dedicated Geospatial Information System (GIS) computer / system available.		
	Plotter / A3 Printer networked to GIS system.		
Meal area	Suitable area available for staff to consume meals.		
Meeting / debrief area available	Discrete area available for meetings and debrief.		
Occupational Health & Safety	Risk assessment undertaken to ensure safe working environment.		
Parking	Secure parking available.		
	All weather parking available.		
Plans	Current hardcopies located in EOC.		
	Electronic versions available through website.		
Rest area	Discrete area available to allow for staff stand down.		
Security	Security of EOC able to be facilitated.		
Stationery	Sufficient supplies available for each work station.		
Tabards	Access to full set of appropriate tabards for position holders and agency liaison officers.		
Whiteboards	Sufficient whiteboards to depict information.		