

Emergency Alert and Warning Work Group (EAWWG) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)



ADOPTED : August 16, 2021

I. Background

The [Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization](#) (RDPO) is a partnership of government agencies and private and nonprofit organizations in the Portland Metropolitan Region (PMR) working together to build and maintain regional all-hazards disaster preparedness capabilities through coordinated planning, training and exercising, and investment in technology and specialized equipment. The PMR encompasses the five counties of Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, and Washington in Oregon and Clark County in Washington, along with the City of Portland. Membership in the RDPO is open to all government jurisdictions in this region, as well as private and nonprofit sector organizations working on disaster preparedness. The work of the RDPO is conducted and coordinated through a well-defined structure of committees and work groups, including the Policy, Steering and Program committees, discipline-specific work groups, and cross-discipline task forces.

In 2014, the RDPO Public Information Officer (PIO) Work Group and the Emergency Management Work Group (REMTEC) jointly drafted the first Regional Alert & Warning Plan. In 2018, an ad hoc subject matter expert group was formed to review the plan and address the need for emergency alert and warning cross-jurisdictional coordination and planning. The group attempted to increase stakeholder participation and began to draft a new plan.

In 2020, the Disaster Messaging Task Force (DMTF) Chair and members engaged the PIO Work Group and those collaborating on regional alert and warning coordination and planning to review and differentiate each group's missions and objectives. They identified the need to form a separate Alert and Warning Work Group in order to address regionally coordinated alert and warning capabilities. The Emergency Alerting and Warning Work Group (EAWWG) was established as a result.

II. Purpose and Goals

- A. **Purpose.** To ensure effective and efficient multi-jurisdictional and cross functional alert and warning coordination during emergency response which meets the needs of the whole community in the Portland Metropolitan Region.
- B. **Goals.**
 - i. Develop and maintain short- and long-term vision, goals, and objectives on emergency alert and warning topics that reflect a unified voice and are based on sound research, thorough assessment, community input, partnership development, and strategy testing.
 - ii. Create and maintain a regional alert and warning concept of operations.

- iii. Consolidate and streamline emergency alert planning efforts of the multiple partners involved.
- iv. Exercise a whole community approach by:
 - a. Focusing efforts on serving those who have been historically and continue to be underserved, underrepresented, and otherwise marginalized by the dominant culture and are therefore more susceptible to suffering the greatest impacts of a disaster. This includes but is not limited to Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other People of Color; those with access and functional needs; those with disabilities or preexisting medical conditions; non-English speaking communities; immigrant and refugee communities; those experiencing homelessness; low-income communities; and children.
 - b. Consulting with the whole community about needs and desires regarding emergency alerting during responses to disasters. This involves working with community members, community leaders, community-based organizations, subject matter experts, and other partners before, during, and after project execution.
- v. Develop and hone partnerships with those who may need to disseminate emergency alerts (e.g., school districts, National Weather Service, fire service, public works entities, public utility providers, parks and recreation departments, public health, poison control, USGS, law enforcement, and other whole community partners).
- vi. Design and test new regional-focused emergency alert and warning projects/initiatives and/or adapt existing local and/or national initiatives/campaigns to the PMR context.
- vii. Maintain a forum for networking, information-sharing, and learning through presentations and discussions with members of this and other RDPO work groups, as well as regional and state partners.
- viii. Maintain a three-year work plan based on community feedback, the RDPO Strategic Plan, and RDPO Steering and Program Committee guidance.
- ix. Regularly review and share emerging alert and warning tools, systems, standards, and best practices.
- x. Provide technical support and/or feedback to RDPO work groups/task forces utilizing alert and warning platforms and create emergency messaging tools, to increase regional consistency.
- xi. Develop and or recommend emergency alert training and exercise standards.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

The Work Group is responsible for:

- A. **Alert & Warning.** Coordinate planning and improvement of alert and warning in the PMR.
- B. **New Projects.** Develop new emergency alert products or improve existing ones based on the Work Group's work plan and communication plan.
- C. **IPAWS Representation.** Serve as a regional representative/liaison to FEMA in regards to the Integrated Public & Alert Warning System (IPAWS).

- D. **After Action Review.** Complete and/or request After Action Reviews on:
 - i. Incidents requiring significant emergency alerts and notifications.
 - ii. Substantial false alarm alerts.
 - iii. Alerts spanning multiple jurisdictions.

- E. **Partnerships.** Provide subject matter expertise and assist other work groups and partners on emergency alerting topics.

IV. Partners

Work Group partners include, but are not limited to:

- A. **RDPO Work Groups.** Disaster Messaging Work Group, Public Safety Communications Work Group (A.K.A., Portland Dispatch Centers Consortium PDCC), PIO Work Group, Emergency Management (REMTEC) Work Group, and the Public Works Work Group. Representatives of the EAWWG provide two-way reporting at these respective work group meetings.

- B. **The Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM).** Oregon counties and 911 call centers have direct lines of communication with OEM. Many EAWWG representatives are from counties or 911 call centers.

- C. **OR-Alert.** All four Oregon counties in RDPO have direct lines of communication with OR-Alert program staff. These county staff should be EAWWG members if they are able OR-Alert program staff will be invited to all EAWWG meetings.

- D. **The Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD).** Washington EMD provides state level alert and warning guidance and facilitates statewide networking opportunities on emergency alerting topics.

- E. **Others.** FEMA IPAWS, National Weather Service, broadcasters, poison control, community members, equity practitioners, and others.

V. Membership and Voting Privileges

- A. **Membership.** Is voluntary and open to all individuals who represent a regional public, private, or nonprofit organization related to emergency alerting in the PMR. Those with an interest and/or investment in the Work Group's purpose but who do not represent a regional public, private, or nonprofit organization related to emergency alerting are welcome to attend meetings but are not eligible for official membership.

- B. **Membership Categories.**
 - i. Individuals from agencies/organizations signatory to the RDPO Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA).

- ii. Individuals from all other agencies/organizations that meet the criteria in Section V, Paragraph A of this SOP.
- C. **Voting Privileges.** Restricted to one vote per RDPO IGA signatory agency/organization.¹ RDPO IGA signatory agencies and organizations with more than one member on the Work Group shall decide who casts their agency's/organization's vote and must declare that individual to the Chair before a vote is taken by the Work Group. The identified members are collectively known as the "designated voting members." [See Section IX below for more on Work Group decision-making.]

VI. Officers

- A. **Positions and Duties.** Work Group leadership shall include:
- i. **Chair.**
 - a. Oversees the maintenance of the EAWWG work plan and ensures it is in alignment with the RDPO Strategic Plan;
 - b. Provides updates and reports to RDPO Program, Steering, and Policy Committees, as requested;
 - c. Ensures the EAWWG SOP is up-to-date, accurate, and approved by RDPO committees;
 - d. Distributes meeting logistics and agendas one week ahead of each meeting;
 - e. Facilitates meetings, reminds participants of [Meeting Ground Rules](#), and ensures minute taking;
 - f. Ensures EAWWG representatives provide two-way reporting between partner work group meetings and EAWWG meetings;
 - g. Provides alert and warning subject matter expertise and perspective to RDPO work groups and regional and state partners;
 - h. Facilitates cross-discipline and cross-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration on regional alert and warning projects and ensures Work Group representation on relevant RDPO task forces (i.e., those formed by the Program, Steering, or Policy committees); and
 - i. Delegates a portion of these duties to the Vice Chair, as needed.
 - ii. **Vice Chair.** Serves in the Chair's absence and assists with duties as needed.
- B. **Eligibility.** Any member of the Work Group, including RDPO staff, is eligible to serve as Chair or Vice Chair. Only one representative of an agency or jurisdiction at a time may hold an officer position, unless the Work Group passes a simple-majority vote to make an exception to this rule.
- C. **Nominations and Elections.** Any Work Group member may nominate candidates (including themselves) to fill Work Group leadership vacancies. Work Group members shall nominate candidates for an officer position at least one month prior to the meeting at which an election is scheduled. Voting can occur at a meeting or through an electronic nomination's process. In the event no nominations are made or no Work Group member steps forward to be nominated,

¹ For the current list, see rdpo.net/governance

RDPO IGA signatory agencies must work together to identify one or more nominees from within their jurisdictions. Positions shall be filled by the candidates for office receiving a simple majority vote of the designated voting members attending the meeting in which an election is held or voting by email or other electronic means.

- D. **Term Limits.** There are no term limits as long as officers are elected each year by the nomination and election process described above. Nominations will take place in December, and elections will take place in January. One year commitments are expected from elected officers.

VII. Subcommittees and Task Forces

1. The Work Group shall form subcommittees and task forces as necessary to help advance its mission and work. Subcommittees are permanent committees focused on a specific subject area of relevance to the Work Group. Task Forces are temporary bodies formed as necessary to help the Work Group conduct business, such as develop a plan or work on a specific project.
2. Any Work Group member can recommend the formation of a subcommittee or task force. The Work Group Chair will employ the consensus model spelled out in Section IX to assist the Work Group in deciding on the recommendation.
3. Each subcommittee and task force shall operate under a clearly defined project charter and/or standard operating procedure developed by that subcommittee or task force and approved by the Work Group through consensus.
4. Work Group members shall fill the positions on subcommittees and task forces. The Work Group may recruit subject matter experts from outside the Work Group as necessary to complete the work.

VIII. Meetings

1. The Work Group meets monthly at a mutually agreed upon time.
2. Special meetings may be held when necessary to conduct Work Group business and may be called by the Chair or Vice Chair or by another member who submits a request to the Chair or Vice Chair.
3. Meetings will use agreed-upon [Ground Rules](#). Decision-making will be based on the consensus model spelled out in Section IX below.
4. An attendance list and notes, including meeting outcomes, will be prepared following each meeting and retained by the Work Group Chair or Vice Chair on the RDPO Google Drive.
5. The Work Group Chair will document key decisions and, as appropriate, transmit them to the Program Committee and other partners.

IX. Decision-Making

- A. The Work Group uses an open, inclusive, and transparent process for conducting business, such as responding to the RDPO Steering Committee’s call to submit projects to the Program Committee for the projects pipeline process. All Work Group members may develop project concepts for Work Group review and consideration. The Chair shall set internal Work Group deadlines and establish procedures and meeting dates to ensure all projects are openly and fully considered. A vote of designated voting members shall be taken to determine which project proposals the EAWWG Chair will include in the final package submitted to the Program Committee.
- B. Except as noted in Paragraph C below, the Work Group makes decisions using a consensus model. The consensus process allows all group members equal weight in the decision-making process. During discussion on an issue requiring a decision by the group, all group members participating are entitled to voice an opinion. The aim of consensus decision-making is to arrive at a decision that *best satisfies the group*. The Chair is responsible for facilitating the consensus process, which can include multiple steps of reviewing and amending a proposal or project to the point where all can live with the final decision.
- C. A vote of eligible members (see Section IV Membership and Voting Privileges) is required on decisions relating to:
 - i. The adoption of project proposals and amendment requests;
 - ii. Revision of the Work Group’s SOP;
 - iii. Election of officers; and
 - iv. When a decision cannot be reached by consensus. A simple majority of votes cast (50%, plus one), either in person or through email or other electronic means, shall constitute the decision.
- D. Whenever a consensus decision or vote takes place, the results of the decision will be included in the notes from the meeting and circulated to all members.

X. Conflict Resolution

If an irresolvable issue or decision-making impasse arises, the following steps lay out a resolution process:

- A. **Step One:** The Work Group Chair and Vice Chair work with the membership to broker an agreement using the consensus model.
- B. **Step Two:** The Work Group Chair and Vice Chair conduct a simple majority vote among the eligible voting members.
- C. **Step Three:** If a simple majority vote does not yield a decision, the Program Committee Chair shall be enlisted to help the Work Group come to an agreement.

XI. Amendments to the Standard Operating Procedure

- A. Any Work Group member may recommend a change to the SOP.
- B. The SOP may only be amended by a simple majority vote of the active members.

XII. Approvals

Date approved by Steering Committee: August 16, 2021

Steering Committee Chair:

Courtney Patterson

Printed Name

August 16, 2021

Date

Courtney A. Patterson

Signature