Washington State
Food Emergency Response Plan

Prepared by the

Washington State

Food Protection Task Force

VERSION 2.0
FINALIZED AUGUST 2018; REVISED JUNE 2023

WA.FOODPROTECTIONTASKFORCE.COM

August 2020

This document has been prepared and maintained by the Washington State Food Protection Task Force including participants from the following agencies:

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Rapid Response Program
Food Safety Program
Animal Feed Program
Produce Safety Program
Food Safety & Consumer Services Laboratory
Chemical and Hop Laboratory

Washington State Department of Health
Food Safety Program
Office of the Assistant Secretary
Communicable Disease Epidemiology
Public Health Laboratories
Office of Shellfish and Water Protection
Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration
Office of Human and Animal Food Division 6-West

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety Inspection Service
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Snohomish Health District
Environmental Health Division

Portions of this plan are based on or extracted from similar plans developed by the states of North Carolina, Michigan, and Minnesota, as well as template and suggested text from the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA). These contributions are appreciated.

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Washington State Department of Agriculture

This is a living document. Reviews and updates will be coordinated by the Washington State Food Protection Task Force. Updates or comments can be directed to:

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Effective June 2023

Contents

Acronyms

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CEMP	Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
DOH	Washington State Department of Health
DOH-PHL	DOH Public Health Laboratories
EMAC	Emergency Mutual Aid Compact
EMD	Washington State Military Department, Emergency Management Division
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ERLN	Environmental Response Laboratory Network
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FBI	U.S. Dept. of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDA	U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FERN	Food Emergency Response Network
FERP	Food Emergency Response Plan
IC	Incident Command
ICLN	Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks
ICS	Incident Command System
JIC	Joint Information Center
LHJ	Local Health Jurisdiction
LRN	Laboratory Response Network
MAC	Multi-Agency Command
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAHLN	National Animal Health Laboratory Network
NASDA	National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
NPDN	National Plant Diagnostic Network
NIMS	National Incident Management System
OHAF-6W	Office of Human and Animal Food Division 6-West (FDA)
PIO	Public Information Officer
PNEMA	Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Arrangement
RRT	Washington State All-Hazards Food/Feed Rapid Response Team
SEOC or State EOC	State Emergency Operations Center
UC	Unified Command
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDA- APHIS	USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
USDA-FSIS	USDA Food Safety Inspection Service
USDA-OIG	USDA Office of Inspector General
USDA-SITC	USDA Smuggling, Interdiction and Trade Compliance
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WSDA	Washington State Department of Agriculture

Preface

In 2009, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) was awarded a federal cooperative agreement to improve WSDA's Food Safety Program infrastructure and to form an all-hazards Food/Feed Emergency Rapid Response Team (RRT) that is compatible with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This document is one result of the work performed under that agreement.

The *Washington State Food Emergency Response Plan (FERP)* was developed because food and feed emergencies in Washington often require a multi-agency response. No one agency has the entire responsibility or jurisdiction for food safety, for food product and food facility inspection, for outbreak investigation, for the potential embargo of contaminated food products, or for public health intervention.

The FERP is intended to provide support for Appendix 4 to Emergency Support Function 11 (ESF-11) – Agriculture and Natural Resources under Washington State's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). The FERP is also designed to stand alone because many of the food emergencies in Washington do not rise to a level that triggers the implementation of the CEMP or ESF-11.

For purposes detailed in this plan, "food" includes products intended for both human and animal consumption (i.e. "feed").

Original members of the RRT Joint Planning Committee (representatives from local, state and federal and agencies), which later became the Washington State Food Protection Task Force, participated in the development of this plan. The task force is the caretaker of the plan and will coordinate updates and additions. Future editions may be broader in scope and may be developed by a different entity.

NOTE: A separate Washington State Food Protection Task Force Food Emergency Response Resource Guide (FERRG) provides contact lists and other more detailed information about the authorities, roles and responsibilities of entities involved in food emergency response. The FERRG (v.1.2, 8/2020) can be accessed from the Washington Food Protection Task Force website "Resources" page: https://wa.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/resources/

The vision of the Washington State Food Protection Task Force is to:

Identify and address food and feed safety issues within Washington State;
Provide food safety and food defense education opportunities to all stakeholders;
and provide a forum to enhance communication and strengthen partnerships amongst public health partners.

1. Introduction

Whether as part of a large disaster or a small, isolated incident, a food emergency is likely to occur in Washington State. In fact, under the definition in the box below, food emergencies happen every year.

CONTENTS

The responsibility for food safety, food product and facility inspection, embargo/stop sale of contaminated or adulterated food products, and public health intervention is spread across multiple entities. The responsibilities are sometimes joint or overlapping. This can lead to confusion, particularly in an emergency. This document was developed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of these various entities and thus serve as a tool to better expedite food emergency responses in a standardized manner.

1.1 PURPOSE

The FERP is intended to:

- Describe the food emergency response system in Washington State;
- Clarify partner agency roles and responsibilities;
- Clarify partner agency authorities and enforcement capabilities;
- Define a basic response framework that can serve as a foundation for future improvements.

As a result, the FERP is meant to be used:

- As a resource for responding to or planning for food emergencies;
- To support Appendix 4 to ESF-11 under Washington's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP);
- As a focal point for discussion around food/feed emergency response in Washington.

What is a Food Emergency?

A food emergency is an incident* that threatens public health through threatened or actual contamination/adulteration of human food or animal food (i.e. feed) and that demands immediate action.

A food emergency may occur at any point in the production system (e.g., pre-harvest production, processing, storage and/or distribution).

The cause of a food emergency may be unintentional or deliberate.

**An incident is an occurrence or event, natural or manmade that requires a response to protect life or property.*
—Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Plan

1.2 SCOPE

The FERP is an overview of the state's food/feed safety and emergency response system:

- It identifies the high-level "who, what, and when" of food safety-related responses to a food emergency;
- It describes how government entities work together (responsibilities, authorities, etc.) in responding to the food safety aspects an emergency;
- It applies to food emergencies resulting from all hazards and is scalable for a wide range of emergencies— routine, high-risk/high-consequence, natural, unintentional, or deliberate. It applies whether or not the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) is activated.

The FERP is also limited:

- It does not replace individual agency response or emergency operations plans (e.g. Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs));
- It does not address the medical aspects of food emergency response (See CEMP ESF-8);
- It is non-binding except as adopted by a participating agency or jurisdiction.

1.3 USING THE FERP

As a whole, the FERP is meant to be used *before* a food emergency including:

- As a training tool for emergency response;
- As a resource/reference tool when creating additional plans/agreements/tools;
- As an illustration of the "big picture" of food emergency response in Washington State.

Parts of the FERP can be used *during* a food emergency to clarify:

- Overall framework, participants, roles and responsibilities;
- Complexity of an incident;
- Issues to address.

For more information that may be useful during a food emergency, see the *Washington State FERRG* (see Preface).

How is the FERP Activated?

Because the FERP is built on day-to-day roles and responsibilities, and it applies to "routine" emergencies as well as disasters (see Section 3.2 Incident Levels), the plan itself requires no special activation process.
It is, in a sense, always activated.

TRAINING

For the FERP to be used effectively, awareness of the plan and training is important. The Food Protection Task Force will coordinate the distribution of new versions of the FERP (when available), and provide a forum for discussion, review, and revisions to the plan, as necessary.

1.4 UPDATING THE FERP

The FERP is a living document and should be updated at **least every three (3) years**. The Food Protection Task Force is the caretaker of the plan and will coordinate updates and additions. Each participating agency is responsible for funding its own participation and for reviewing and updating its own information in the plan. Agencies should review their contact information regularly and notify the Task Force Chair with any changes.

2. Situation and Assumptions

2.1 SITUATION

Washington is a geographically, agriculturally, and culturally diverse state with extensive regional, national, and international markets. The effects of a food emergency could be limited to a local region or reach far beyond the state's borders. A wide variety of conditions have the potential to affect the response efforts for a food/feed-related incident including:

CONTENTS

- General geographic conditions;
- Varied food culture/processing methods;
- Cultural issues/challenges;
- Existing plans/policies/jurisdictions.

Examples of these are outlined below. The lists are not meant to be comprehensive, but to provide a starting point for things to consider when planning for or responding to a food emergency. The intent is to remember that there is a larger picture to consider than simply the source of an outbreak or threat.

2.1.1 General geographic conditions

- U.S. Border state – Washington shares an approximate 430-mile border with British Columbia, Canada (160 mi. aquatic, 270 mi. terrestrial), including 13 highway border crossing points.
- Geographically varied and divided –
    - 66,544 square miles.
    - 28,000 miles of shorelines, including lakes, streams, rivers and marine waters.
    - Elevation ranges from sea level to 14,000+ ft.
    - Cascade Mountain Range divides state into east and west sides, and Olympic Mountains span the Olympic Peninsula.
    - Columbia River – drains more than half the state.
    - 39 counties.
    - Population – approximately 7.6 million (2019). The west side of the state is more densely populated than the eastern region of the state.
- Trade state – Washington plays a significant role in international trade. The state's 75 port districts include a wide range of facilities, including international airports, deep-water ports in Puget Sound and along the Columbia River, and the third largest container complex in North America (the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma combined).
- Ground transportation – I-5 and I-90 are the major north/south and east/west highway corridors, respectively. There is limited highway access around or through the Cascade Range and Olympic Mountains. Ten bridges across the Columbia River provide key connections to Oregon and points south.
- Natural disasters –Washington is subject to a various natural hazards including earthquakes, wildfires, floods, tsunamis, volcanoes, and landslides.
- Military bases – U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Air National Guard, and Army National Guard all have bases in Washington.

- Nuclear sites – Include power plants (Energy Northwest-Hanford), Navy Region Northwest (Bangor, Bremerton, and Everett) and the U.S. Department of Energy-Hanford site in Richland, WA.
- Tourism – Multiple national parks, forests, historic sites and other features attract tourists from around the world. Cruises sail out of Seattle. Vancouver, Washington area hosts visitors to Portland, Oregon. Fairs, festivals, conventions, and other large gatherings are held throughout the state.

2.1.2 Food-related conditions

- Wide range of food products – Washington's diverse growing conditions support a wide variety of food products, from fruits and vegetables to herbs, nuts, mushrooms, meat, poultry, dairy, seafood, and shellfish. With more than 300 types of crops produced, something is always in season. Some food sources are cultivated; others are wild.
- Production and processing leader - Washington is a leading producer of apples, pears, and several other food crops. Washington also is a leading processor of fruit juices. Food production and processing operations range from very small (cottage operations) to very large, corporate operations. Food processing generated more than $20.1 billion in revenue (2016).
- Trade and distribution – Washington food producers are a key part of the state's domestic and international trade. Approximately $6.7 billion in food and agriculture products were exported to international trade partners in 2016. The state's coastal location supports efficient shipping to markets in Asia. The lower Green River Valley (Kent-Auburn-Renton-Tukwila) is the second largest warehouse district on the West Coast. It supports food shipments throughout the Northwest and nearly all food shipments to Alaska.
- Irrigation - Irrigation is the largest single use of water in Washington. More than 1/3 of farmland is irrigated.
- Multi-agency regulation/oversight - Federal, state and local governments regulate different portions of the food production, processing, preparation, storage, and distribution systems. (See Section 4). In addition, there are 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington that have a government-to-government relationship with the state. Some tribes produce/process food for sale off the reservation (e.g., canned salmon). At least 20 tribes operate casino or resort facilities.

2.1.3 Cultural issues/challenges

- Multi-cultural/multi-lingual – Portions of Washington's population have distinct cultural habits, traditions, and practices. Variations are commonly found among urban, rural, tribal, east-side, west-side, coastal, and inland populations. Pockets of the state have populations for whom English is not their native language. Languages include Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Japanese, Chinese-Mandarin, Chinese-Cantonese, Native American tribal languages, and more. These unique cultural and language differences should be considered when determining how to most appropriately and efficiently respond to food emergencies.

2.1.4 Existing plans/policies/jurisdictions

- Washington's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP defines the roles and responsibilities of all state agencies in the event of an emergency. ESF-11 includes "assurance of safety of the food supply." Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is the lead coordinating agency for ESF-11, WSDA, and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) are the primary state agencies the food safety responsibility. In

a food emergency, ESF-8 (Public Health and Medical Services) may also apply. DOH is the coordinator and primary agency for ESF-8.

- National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS provides standards for managing domestic incidents involving multiple jurisdictions. NIMS compliance by the state is required in all planning documents that link to the CEMP.
- County plans - Counties have their own emergency management plans and are often the first to respond to emergencies within their jurisdiction.
- Agency plans -Individual local, state, and federal agencies have internal emergency response or operations plans that may apply to their roles in food emergencies.

2.2 ASSUMPTIONS

The FERP is based on the assumption that the following considerations are, will be, or are likely to become true.

2.2.1 Incident Assumptions

- Food emergencies will occur, and will vary in scope, complexity, and geographic location.
- Some incidents will be highly localized within Washington State, while others will involve entities or impacts outside of the state's or the nation's borders.
- Food emergencies may be the result of natural sources, accidents, or intentional acts. Some may be part of larger disaster events (e.g. earthquake impacting food) or be the result of intentional contamination.
- Threats to food safety may be biological, chemical, physical, or radiological.
- Incidents may occur at any point in the food chain — harvest, production, processing, storage, distribution, and service.
- Initial notification of a threat or problem may come from any source, public or private.
- Incidents may be triggered by the discovery of an actual or potential foodborne illness (e.g., food contamination/adulteration found through routine surveillance or monitoring).
- Some incidents may have grave consequences. Some may trigger public panic.

2.2.2 Response Assumptions

- Food emergencies often require a multi-agency response. No one agency has the entire responsibility and jurisdiction for food safety, food product and food facility inspection, or public health intervention and control measures. For more information, see FERRG Section 4.

- All agencies will work within their jurisdictions as defined by statute. WSDA and FDA will coordinate food/feed response activities through the Washington Rapid Response Team (RRT).
- Additional resources may be required from other agencies within or outside the state. These resources may be needed for expertise, logistics, or capacity.
- Some food emergencies may require activation of the SEOC.
- For level 2, 3, or 4 food emergencies (see Section 3.2 Incident Levels), all agencies will comply with NIMS standards regarding use of the Incident Command System (ICS) for organizing their response.
- The unique nature of multijurisdictional response is best served by the use of a Unified Command. This addresses the concerns, capabilities, authorities, and limitations of all involved "lead agencies".
- Foodborne illness investigations will be based on the "three-legged stool" of laboratory, epidemiology, and environmental investigation.
- There may be the need for recalls or control measures such as embargoes, trade restrictions, or destruction of products, livestock, or poultry. Some products may need to be treated as hazardous waste. Some food and feed products may be able to be safely re-conditioned or diverted to other uses.
- Verification, environmental assessments, and/or re-inspection actions will need to be taken to assure control, possibly identify root cause, and assist in recovery.
- The academic and private sectors may be needed to provide support in product trace back/trace forward, product removal, technical expertise, public information, laboratory services, equipment, and personnel.

Incident Command System (ICS)

An all-hazards, on-scene functional management system that establishes common standards in organization, terminology and procedures. ICS provides a means (Unified Command) for the establishment of a common set of incident objectives and strategies during multi-agency/multi-jurisdiction operations while maintaining individual agency/jurisdiction authority, responsibility and accountability. ICS is a component of the National Interagency Incident Management Systems (NIMS).

--Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Plan

2.2.3 Plan and Policy Assumptions

- NIMS principles will apply.
- Although food emergencies are covered under ESF-11, other ESFs may also apply, depending on the nature of the emergency. ESFs will be coordinated through the SEOC.
- The FERP applies to all food emergencies — regardless of the cause and whether or not the emergency rises to the level requiring the use and/or activation of the SEOC and the CEMP.
- State and local emergency plans are consistent with the CEMP.
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Emergency Mutual Aid Compacts or agreements are in place as needed to facilitate support via resource and information sharing.

3. Food Emergency Response Framework

3.1 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

CONTENTS

Washington State's response to a food emergency is built on day-to-day food safety/public health roles and responsibilities identified in state statutes and spread across multiple agencies and jurisdictions. Effective responses depend on access to emergency resources, coordinated efforts, and a strong network of food safety professionals at local, state, and federal agencies.

If the emergency overwhelms local resources or affects multiple jurisdictions (Incident Level 2 or greater—see Section 3.2), coordination and cooperation are essential. For example:

- If additional resources are needed beyond what existing agreements provide for, the Incident Management Team/Unified Command will request the agency/local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) or SEOC coordinate the effort to obtain additional resource support (personnel, supplies, etc.).
- If ESF-11 to the CEMP is activated, WSDA will assist in coordinating the response.
- If ESF-8 to the CEMP is activated, DOH will assist in coordinating the response.
- If a food emergency is part of a larger event (such as a natural disaster or terrorist activity), the food emergency response will support the larger response as a part of the established ICS structure. Regardless of scale, all response and recovery activities will be consistent with the state CEMP.

To support a rapid and effective response, the existing framework provides for:

- **Rapid incident identification**—surveillance, notification and action triggers.
- **Activated emergency resources** – Washington Rapid Response Team (RRT), SEOC, mutual aid agreements, Food Emergency Response Network (FERN).
- **Effective incident management** –Unified Command, standardized communication, and intra-/interstate coordination.

3.1.1 Incident identification

SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance is **essential** in identifying a food emergency or recognizing the initial signs of a developing emergency. Active and passive surveillance occurs at local, state and federal levels, and in both the public and private sectors. Local sources are often instrumental during the initial identification of food emergencies.

Local sources:

- Consumers
- Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs)
- Poison control centers
- Hospitals/Emergency Departments
- Private practice physicians
- Local law enforcement
- Food retailers
- Food manufacturers/processors
- Food distributors including food banks and pantries
- Veterinarians
- Food growers/processors
- Noxious weed control boards

State and Federal level surveillance activities

- Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conduct routine surveillance sampling of high-risk food commodities.
- LHJs, DOH, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analyze and report human illness for unusual clusters or patterns.
- WSDA, FDA, and USDA analyze reports of animal illness for unusual clusters or patterns.

For more information on surveillance activities, see the FERRG.

Specific observations that *may* indicate a food emergency has occurred include:

- Discovery of characteristic(s) of a food item or agricultural product that suggests possible contamination/adulteration with a biological, physical, chemical, or radiological agent (e.g., presence of a known pathogen or foreign material, an unidentified or unexpected powder, a bad odor or an abnormal taste);
- Observation of suspicious behavior or activity by an employee or customer;
- Illness complaints that focus on common food item(s);
- A significant security breach in a food-system facility, storage tank, or shipping vehicle;
- Receipt of a threat (e.g., via a telephone call, piece of mail, etc.) indicating that an agricultural or food product has been or will be contaminated;
- Unusual clusters of human or animal illness of a type potentially associated to food or feed products. If biological in nature, these clusters may be further described by use of molecular subtyping such as Pulsed Field Gel Electrophoresis (PFGE) and/or Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS).

NOTIFICATION AND ACTION TRIGGERS

What is found through surveillance can trigger the notification of proper authorities and their specific actions.

- Reportable human diseases and conditions – Under Chapter 246-101 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), local health care providers and laboratories must report certain diseases and conditions to local health departments, who in turn report to DOH. Clinical and reference laboratories also must submit biological specimens for certain notifiable conditions to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories for further characterization and identification of illness clusters potentially of foodborne origin.

  Any agency may receive an unusual cluster of complaints that may indicate a food emergency has occurred. Any suspected foodborne outbreak is reportable to DOH, which would notify appropriate state and federal agencies.

- Reportable animal diseases and conditions – Under Chapter 16-70 WAC, veterinarians or veterinarian laboratories must report certain diseases and conditions to WSDA. Some of these diseases and conditions have the potential to be feed-borne in origin such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Listeriosis, Salmonella, African Swine Fever, etc. Response coordination of some reportable animal diseases, especially those from a foreign source, may be further detailed under the current Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) plan maintained by WSDA.

- Food safety issues – WSDA, DOH, FDA, or an LHJ may identify a food emergency through food surveillance (e.g. sampling, routine facility inspections), environmental surveillance, consumer complaints, notifiable condition surveillance, industry notification, or via law enforcement.

- Criminal actions – Any agency that suspects intentional contamination of food will notify law enforcement and other appropriate agencies via their established protocols and procedures. If there is suspected or confirmed intentional contamination of food, participating food emergency response agencies will support law enforcement (local, state, and/or federal), as required, in obtaining and analyzing samples for evidence. Local, state, and federal response teams such as RRTs may also integrate with law enforcement incident management teams to assist with the investigation and evidence collection process. Vice versa, law enforcement entities may also incorporate response teams into their response structure.

3.1.2 Emergency Resources

Food emergency roles and responsibilities are based largely on day-to-day food safety/public health functions and jurisdictions. However, the nature and/or scope of an emergency may require the use of specialized or additional resources, such as those identified below.

RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

The Washington Rapid Response Team (RRT) is a partnership primarily between WSDA and FDA Office of Human and Animal Food Division 6-West (FDA OHAF-6W) and is supported with federal cooperative agreement funding. The RRT is an all-hazards team, and may be used in all food and feed-related incidents that involve overlapping jurisdictions between WSDA and FDA (see current version of the Washington RRT Operations Manual).

- The RRT scope of work includes both human and animal food. It does not include retail food establishments (e.g. restaurants and grocery stores). Investigations and other activities carried out in these environments would be done in conjunction with the appropriate LHJ(s) and DOH.

- RRT responsibilities include trace back/trace forward, food and environmental sampling, environmental assessment/root cause analysis, facilitating recalls, information sharing, etc.

- When fully activated, the RRT uses a Unified Command ICS structure, and WSDA and FDA team members deploy together. The team structure allows for more effective sharing of resources, information, and capabilities. Other response agencies may join the Unified Command if appropriate to the incident.

AGENCY /LOCAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTERS (EOCs)

Agency/Local EOCs provide for the *coordination* of resources, actions, or operations to support the Incident Management Team. NOTE: An EOC is not the same as the Incident Command Post and does not create or carry out operational response objectives or activities.

- Agencies and local jurisdictions (usually counties or health districts) may activate their Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) as required to support their roles in the response to an incident. This includes activation to help prepare for a potential emergency. For

example, the WSDA-EOC may activate in response to large animal disease outbreaks, radiological accidents, plant diseases, or pest infestations. EOCs may activate independently or in conjunction with the SEOC, depending on the situation and response needs.

- Each agency/local EOC will be activated in accordance with its agency's plans, policies and procedures. The level of activation will be determined by the agency. An EOC may transition to either a higher or lower level of activation, or deactivate as appropriate, depending on the situation and duration of the incident.

- If more than one EOC is activated, close coordination between EOCs is required to avoid confusion and duplication of resources. This will be accomplished primarily through the SEOC. If the SEOC is not activated, other supporting agencies (local, state, and federal) may send a Liaison Officer to another agency's EOC for better interagency coordination during the incident.

THE STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

The SEOC serves as a Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC) and supports state agency, local jurisdiction, and tribal partners emergency response operations---including incident, area, or unified command structures. The primary roles of the SEOC are to coordinate, communicate, dispatch, and track resources, and to collect, analyze and disseminate information.

- The SEOC is activated when the incident exceeds the response capacity of the lead agency or the local government and its mutual aid, or when the resources for multiple state agencies need to be coordinated. SEOC activation for a food emergency would generally be a joint action of WSDA or DOH and the state's Emergency Management Division (EMD).

- In all food emergencies, communications between stakeholders will be critical to ensure the best possible coordination. Having appropriate representation of affected agencies in the SEOC will help ensure consistent communication. When appropriate, industry representatives can be asked to participate. Agencies also have the ability to be represented virtually in the SEOC through the online WebEOC portal.

- Representatives from WSDA and DOH commonly provide core services at the SEOC for Emergency Support Functions 11 (Agriculture and Natural Resources) and 8 (Public Health, Medical, and Mortuary Services), respectively. Per the SEOC's standing procedures, the liaisons or representatives of the core services are identified within the emergency response plans and the contact information for all is maintained and updated by the appropriate team leader. EMD will provide expertise in operating within the SEOC and provides routine trainings throughout the year. However, the lead agency, WSDA or DOH, will establish the policy for the response operations.

EMACS AND MUTUAL AID

- The use of the Emergency Mutual Aid Compacts (EMACs) and established mutual aid agreements will supplement local and state resources, when required. The procedures for obtaining authority to request or offer interstate assistance reside with the SEOC. The use of the Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Arrangement (PNEMA) will be

coordinated with assistance of the SEOC, or State Emergency Operations Officer if the SEOC is not in operation.

FOOD EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK

- **The Food Emergency Response Network (FERN)** is a national network of local, state, and federal food/feed-testing laboratories that can respond to emergencies involving biological, chemical, or radiological contamination of food. FERN can provide surge capacity if state and federal laboratories in Washington State are overwhelmed. FERN is a resource not only for response to a food emergency, but also for prevention, preparedness, and recovery. The FERN Steering Committee includes representatives from several state labs and federal agencies and day-to-day FERN operations are a joint venture between USDA and FDA. The FERN Pacific Region serves Washington State.

- FERN is one of several laboratory networks in the **Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (ICLN).** These networks provide coordinated, nationwide analytical services to counteract potential threats. Each network has its own mission and focus, and is prepared to respond to intentional attacks or natural disasters. Depending on the nature of the incident, one of these other networks may also be used during a food emergency in Washington State:
    - **Laboratory Response Network (LRN) –** focus on chemical and biological terrorism, emerging infectious diseases, and other public health threats and emergencies. Managed by the CDC.
    - **Environmental Response Laboratory Network (ERLN) —** focus on characterizing the extent and degree of contamination in environmental media, including the analysis of drinking water and wastewater. Managed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
    - **National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN)** — focus on rapid detection, diagnosis, and early communication of outbreaks of potentially damaging pests of food, feed, fiber, fuel crops, and forest trees. Managed by USDA.
    - **National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) —** focus on animal health emergencies, including bioterrorist incidents, newly emerging diseases, and foreign animal disease (FAD) agents that threaten the nation's food supply and public health. NAHLN is a partnership between USDA's Animal and Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), as well as the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD).

3.1.3 Unified Command

Unified Command is appropriate for managing the **response** and **resources** for Level 2, 3 and 4 incidents (See Section 3.2 below).

What is Unified Command?

The Unified Command organization consists of the Incident Commanders from the various jurisdictions or agencies operating together to form a single command structure in the field.
--FEMA

As a team effort, Unified Command allows all agencies with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for the incident to jointly provide management direction through a common set of incident objectives and strategies and a single Incident Action Plan. Each participating agency maintains its authority, responsibility, and accountability.
--NIMS

- The local government or lead agency will have the lead for operational management until a Unified Command is established for the incident. The Unified Command is then responsible for coordinating activities at the incident scene.

- Any agency with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility may be part of Unified Command. The Unified Command may ask other agencies with key support roles to participate in the ICS structure, as appropriate.

- If a Level 2, 3, or 4 incident (see Section 3.2 Incident Levels) involves WSDA jurisdiction, WSDA will establish Unified Command with FDA OHAF-6W through the Washington Food/Feed RRT. Other stakeholders may be added to the Unified Command depending on the nature of the incident and jurisdictional requirements.

- When an **agency/local EOC** or equivalent has been activated, it may support the Unified Command by requesting an Incident Management Team (IMT) for the incident site that has been or could be overtaxed. The administrators of the agencies involved with responding to the incident may delegate command of the incident to the IMT if the incident grows too large to be managed with agency resources. The agency/local EOC provides coordination and policy guidance with outside supporting agencies according to the NIMS guidance and may request support from the SEOC.

- Once the SEOC has been activated, the Disaster Manager/SEOC Supervisor assigns personnel, as required, to staff the five (5) General Staff elements of the SEOC (management and policy, planning, operations, logistics, and finance and administration) depending on the level of activation. The Unified Command is responsible for carrying out activities at the incident scene, and the SEOC provides *coordination and policy guidance* with outside supporting agencies according to the NIMS guidance.

- At the **SEOC** level, the lead agency may differ depending on the type of incident that occurs. The responsible regulatory agency (WSDA or DOH) would initially be the lead agency for food-related emergencies. Joint management of the incident is recommended. If the incident is an intentional act, law enforcement would typically become the lead agency for the criminal components of the response including evidence collection.
    - DOH Communicable Disease Epidemiology will be responsible for human health surveillance and epidemiological investigation.
    - For incidents involving food at the **retail** level, LHJs, in coordination with DOH, will be responsible for product trace back, removal of product from the marketplace, inspections, field investigations, and other activities to ensure the safety of food available to consumers.

- For incidents involving food at most **non-retail** levels within Washington State, WSDA will be responsible for the functions listed above. For food products that are solely distributed intrastate, WSDA will be responsible, while interstate distribution will be coordinated in conjunction with WSDA, FDA, and/or USDA for product traceback, removal of the product from the marketplace, investigational activities, and other activities to ensure the safety of food available to consumers.
- If two or more jurisdictions have lead roles, then a Unified Command and Multiagency Coordination Group (MAC Group) may be established per NIMS guidelines.

COMMUNICATION (See also Section 5)

- The State CEMP outlines available communication infrastructure within and between state agencies. A contact list for primary and support entities is included in the *FERRG.*

- When necessary, a Joint Information Center (JIC) will be established to develop and distribute clear and consistent public messages. All involved federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, academia, and industry will be represented in the JIC, as appropriate. See 5.2 Public Information. Currently, WSDA and DOH maintain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), dated May 2015, which indicates that a JIC will be established between the two agencies when deemed necessary.

- Existing public health communication tools (health provider alerts, LHJ communication system, Situation Reports (SITREPs)) will be utilized as appropriate to communicate with appropriate response partners.

INTERSTATE COORDINATION

When incidents cross state boundaries or require support from outside states and the SEOC is activated, the SEOC will support incident management and policy coordination.

The SEOC will:

- Ensure that each agency involved with incident management activities is providing appropriate situational awareness and resource status information;
- Establish a single set of priorities among all involved states;
- Acquire and allocate resources required by incident management personnel in concert with the Incident Command (IC), Unified Command (UC), or Area Command (AC) involved;
- Anticipate and identify future resource requirements;
- Coordinate the Joint Information System (JIS) for the incident;
- Coordinate and resolve policy issues arising from the incident;
- Provide strategic coordination, as required.

Agreements for mutual support such as the PNEMA, existing mutual aid agreements, and EMACs should be utilized to obtain out-of-state resources.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the FDA or USDA may at times coordinate federal level actions with or without involving SEOCs.

Circumstances when interstate interaction might occur include, but are not limited to:

- Contaminated/adulterated food has been shipped either to or through another state;

- Out-of-state facilities process food distributed into the state;
- Foodborne illness cases are located in more than one state;
- State response overwhelms state's resources.

3.2 INCIDENT LEVELS

"Level 1" – Localized or single jurisdiction

A food emergency is "routine" in that it is restricted to a limited population or area, is of a known or common complexity, and requires no special application of local or state response resources. It is under a single jurisdiction, but may include technical assistance from state resources. Criminal activity or terrorism is not suspected, and the local or lead agency mechanisms to deal with the incident are adequate.

"Level 2" – Special state support needed or multi-jurisdictional.

A food emergency has expanded or is of a level of complexity so that local or lead agency resources cannot adequately respond whether due to jurisdictional, capability, or capacity limitations. Special state support elements are needed to assist with the local or regional investigative efforts and information sharing.

NOTE: This activation level involves the engagement of one or more state agencies but does not imply that the SEOC will necessarily be activated. However, a Unified Command should be established to manage incident operations.

"Level 3" - Beyond state/national borders

A food emergency has been traced to a distributed food product either:

- originating out-of-state, or
- originating within the state but shipped out-of-state or tied into a distribution network that impacts multiple states.

State resources are required to coordinate, support, or lead the response. Multi-state coordination may be required, and federal resources also may be requested.

The Washington Food/Feed RRT may initiate a coordinated response or fully activate per established RRT procedures based on the complexity and resource needs of the response. FDA Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation (CORE) would most likely coordinate the FDA response if the food product in question is under that agency's regulatory authority.

The level of activation would include issues identified in Level 2. The SEOC may be notified if additional resources and coordination is anticipated. The SEOC may be activated as required by the specifics of the incident.

"Level 4" - Beyond food

A food emergency is part of a larger incident (e.g. major floods or earthquake) that requires the activation of additional state response plans or ESFs. Coordination between multiple lead agencies is required. Interstate and federal coordination is required. The level of activation also would include issues identified in Levels 2 and 3. May include a formal emergency declaration by the Governor or President of the United States.

Intentional Act

Any Level 2, 3, or 4 food emergency incident could be caused by an intentional act (e.g. intentional contamination/adulteration or terrorist activity). In this case, state and/or federal resources may be needed to assist in the criminal investigative portion of the response. If the incident is believed or shown to be an intentional act, law enforcement will take the lead in the criminal investigative portion of the response.

An incident suspected of being an intentional act is designated by indicating so in response documentation. For example a level 3 intentional contamination/adulteration incident would be titled, "Intentional Contamination of Processed Food X". A Unified Command will immediately be established with appropriate agencies in cases of intentional contamination/adulteration.

3.3 PREPARATION, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

3.3.1 Preparation

In addition to the agency-specific preparation measures that they develop and implement, all agencies should consider taking the following general preparation measures:

- Ensure personnel receive training on this FERP and agency-specific operating plans and procedures;
- Ensure all agency personnel potentially participating obtain the appropriate level of ICS training;
- Refine and exercise agency-specific response plans and procedures relative to the state's food supply;
- Regularly review all food and human and/or animal illness surveillance and epidemiologic information;
- Regularly assess and communicate with all appropriate facilities in the food supply chain regarding vulnerabilities relative to intentional acts, and encourage facilities to mitigate these vulnerabilities;
- Coordinate with partner agency communication offices regarding pre-planned public risk communication messaging;
- Verify necessary laboratory capacity for increased surveillance and response surge capacity;
- Ensure that existing consumer and industry complaint systems effectively capture complaint data, and that these data are regularly reviewed to recognize unusual patterns;
- Ensure that all foodborne illness complaints are referred to the appropriate agency(ies) as well as processed according to agency-specific complaint procedures.

3.3.2 Response

Specific response actions and entities will vary according to the incident. However, all responding agencies will share some common responsibilities. Each is responsible for:

- Operating within its authority and under its own specific emergency and operational plan(s);
- Assessing its available resources and strategically prioritizing them to address response activities;
- Identifying issues and concerns;
- Communicating with and seeking cooperation from partner agencies as needed;
- Participating in and staffing the Unified Command, as appropriate.

See Section 4 – Food/Feed Response Framework in Action for more detail.

3.3.3 Recovery

The following is a list of recovery topics that are commonly addressed during food emergencies:

- Identification of all areas that require recovery activities and support;
- Temporary suspension of food production by impacted food facilities;
- Rapid confirmatory sample results from laboratories;
- Rapid recall of implicated/impacted food products;
- Holding or disposition of affected food products;
- Public information coordination, development and dissemination, with the goal to re-establish public trust and confidence in the commodity and the food chain in general;
- Financial assistance for agencies and industry that were impacted by the incident;
- Industry-specific communication about how they will prevent the incident from happening in future;
- Liability issues;
- Continuity of public health and regulatory operations;
- Provision of necessary medical assistance (to include mental health service) to those affected by the emergency;
- Alternate transportation plans;
- Alternate communication plans;

Figure 1

Washington State
Food Emergency Response Overview

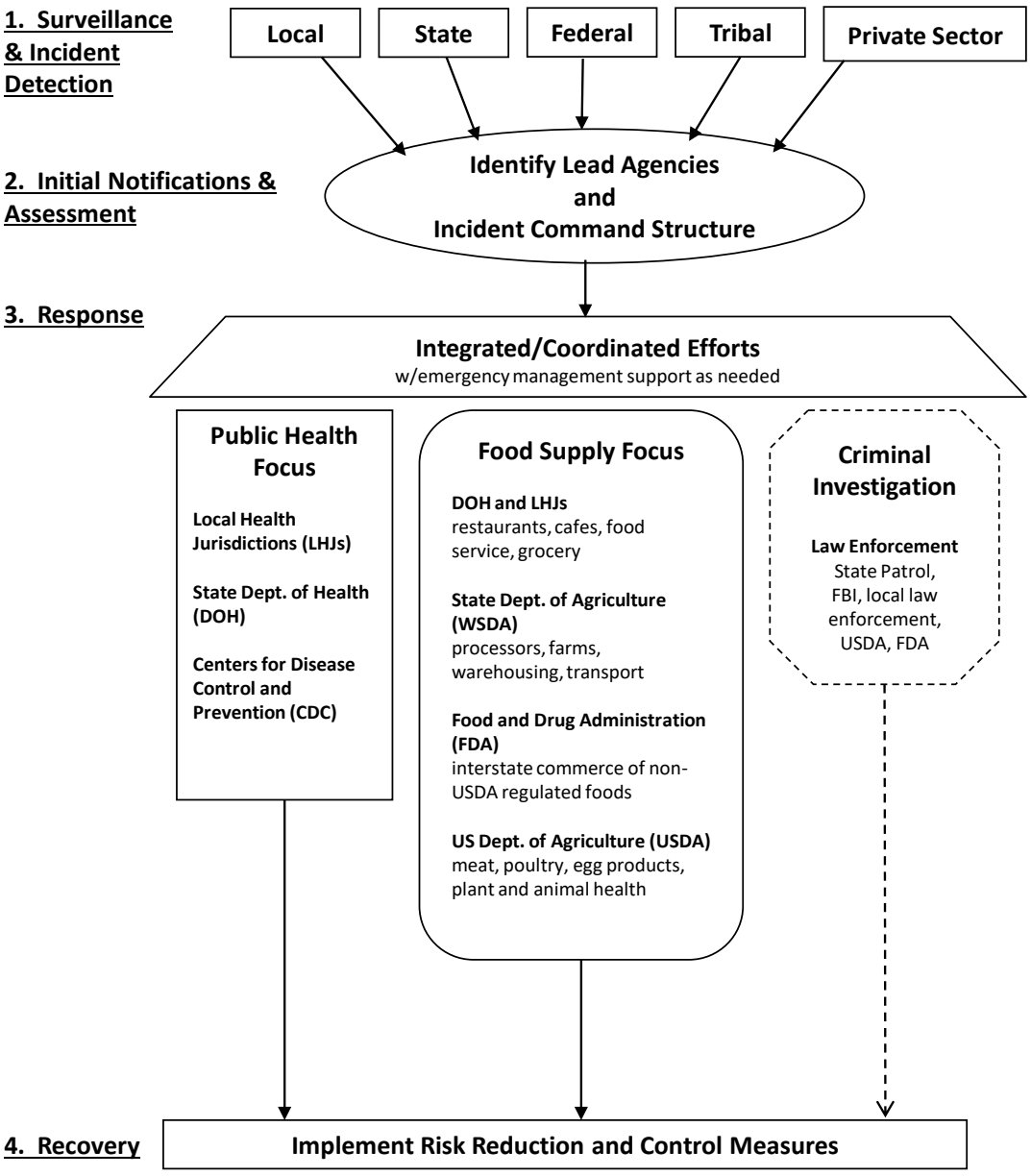

Figure 1 is intended to show the basic framework of response. Actual participants will vary with each incident.

Above diagram based on similar element in *Michigan Food Emergency Management Pla*n, 2009.

4. Food Emergency Response Framework in Action

4.1 TYPICAL RESPONSE ACTIONS

CONTENTS

Response actions typically focus on response management, investigation, and control. Examples of each type are listed below:

4.1.1 Response management actions

- Coordinate response activities with federal, state, and local authorities utilizing Unified Command.
- Obtain additional resources (including staff), as necessary.
- Consult with federal, state, and local authorities on food safety threats.
- Define the affected area and control zone.
- Identify just-in-time training needs.
- Prepare and issue information for dissemination to the public, producers, processors, other government agencies (OGA), and other stakeholders.

4.1.2 Investigative actions

- Review case reports to detect clusters and patterns through epidemiologic methods, including use of molecular analysis methods such as PFGE and WGS.
- Conduct case interviews.
- Perform trace back/trace forward on suspected contaminated/adulterated foods.
- Conduct targeted inspections.
- Collect and analyze samples – food, environmental and clinical.
- Continue surveillance.
- Conduct criminal investigations/gather evidence.
- Support law enforcement in the collection of evidence.
- Conduct environmental assessments and root cause analysis.

4.1.3 Control actions

- Identify product distribution patterns (intra- or interstate).
- Encourage voluntary closure of a retail facility.
- Require mandatory closure of a retail facility.
- Implement an embargo or detention on contaminated products.
- Request voluntary product recalls.
- Implement mandatory product recalls (FDA enforcement capability, when needed and when definitions are met).
- Implement quarantine.
- Clean and sanitize or disinfect.
- Control vectors.
- Issue transportation permits.
- Verify proper disposition of diseased livestock or contaminated/adulterated food products.
- Take immediate legal action (administrative detention, seizure, etc.)
- Perform follow-up inspections – verification, control.

4.2 KEY PARTICIPANTS AND AUTHORITIES

Participants will vary depending on the level, nature, and scope of the food-related incident. The lists below include potential key participants. For all Level 2, 3, or 4 food-related incidents that require activation of the CEMP and ESF-11, the WSDA and/or DOH will be the primary agencies (see box below). For all Level 2, 3 or 4 incidents with a suspected or confirmed intentional contamination/adulteration component, the Washington State Patrol will also be a primary agency. ESF-11 primary agencies are marked below with an asterisk.

All agencies will operate under their normal regulatory authorities unless an emergency declaration is issued and additional authorities are assigned. All local, state, and federal agencies operating under Unified Command will operate according to National Incident Management System (NIMS) principles, and when activated, the SEOC will coordinate but not command all activities within the state.

4.2.1 Local government

- Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs)
- Local Emergency Management/EOCs
- Mayors, City Managers, or County Executives
- Local, county, or municipal waste authorities
- Local officials charged with coordinating with tribal authorities
- Law enforcement
- Fire departments and hazardous materials (HAZMAT) response teams
- Emergency medical services and hospitals
- School districts

4.2.2 Washington State

- Office of the Governor
- Department of Agriculture (WSDA)*
- Department of Health (DOH)*
- Washington State Patrol (WSP)
- Department of Ecology (Ecology)
- Department of Commerce (Commerce)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
- Department of Licensing (DOL)
- Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)
- Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
- Emergency Management Division (EMD)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Office of the Attorney General (AG)
- Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (OIA)

* Primary Agencies for ESF-11 for food/feed emergencies

PRIMARY AGENCY - A state agency or agency assigned primary responsibility to manage and coordinate a specific Emergency Support Function (ESF). Primary agencies are designated on the basis of who has the most authorities, resources, capabilities or expertise relative to accomplishment of the specific Emergency Support Function with assistance, if requested, from the SEOC. An example of a primary agency is the Department of Transportation for ESF 1 - Transportation.

SUPPORT AGENCY - An agency designated to assist a specific primary or joint primary agency with available resources, capabilities or expertise in support of Emergency Support Function (ESF) activities under the coordination of the primary or joint primary, agency. An example of a support agency is the Department of Agriculture for ESF 8 – Public Health, Medical, and Mortuary Services.

Definitions from the Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

4.2.3 Federal government

- Department of Health and Human Services (Coordinating body for ESF-8)

    - U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)*
    - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
    - Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
    - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
    - Smuggling, Interdiction, Trade Compliance (SITC)
    - Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
    - Office of Inspector General (OIG)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
    - Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
    - Office of Pesticide Programs
    - Office of Water
- Department of Interior (IOS)
    - National Park Service (NPS)
    - Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
    - Forest Service (USFS)
- Department of Homeland Security
        - Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
        - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Department of Justice (DOJ)
        - Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)
- U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS)

* Primary Agencies for ESF-11 for food/feed emergencies

4.2.4 Tribal authorities

- Tribal governments, including food safety and/or environmental health programs
- Tribal emergency management divisions

4.2.5 Canadian government

- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
- Health Canada
- Provincial ministries of agriculture and health

4.2.6 Non-governmental organizations

- Red Cross
- Disaster relief and support organizations
- Volunteer support organizations
- Academic institutions
- Land grant university extension offices
- Poison control centers
- Food industry stakeholders
- Food commodity/trade/professional associations
- Noxious weed control boards

4.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For many agencies, emergency functions are extensions of their day-to-day roles and responsibilities. Several key response agencies perform the following broad functions in food emergencies. Not all functions listed below will apply to all incidents.

Some emergency functions are lead roles; others are support roles. **Lead response roles are held by those with jurisdiction. For Level 2, 3, and 4 incidents, any agency with a jurisdictional (lead) role may be part of the Unified Command.** The Unified Command may ask other agencies with key support roles to participate in the ICS structure as appropriate.

For more information on roles and responsibilities, see the Food Protection Task Force Food Emergency Response Resource Guide. For general emergency functions for state agencies, see the CEMP.

4.3.1 Local government

Local government response capacities and resources vary considerably across the state and operate in a "decentralized" or "home rule" structure. All local governments play an important role as first responders and often are the first to identify and respond to an incident. All local governments carry the responsibility to:

- Lead local food emergency response.
- Conduct local public health and food safety surveillance.
- Notify appropriate state agencies of confirmed or suspected foodborne illnesses or food-related incidents.
- Implement appropriate and available control measures.
- Notify state authorities when an incident exceeds local ability or capacity to respond effectively.
- Disease surveillance and reporting.
- Case finding and verification.
- Case investigation for hypothesis generation.
- Implement local emergency plans.
- Release local resources as needed to support response to a food emergency.
- Lead environmental assessments at retail food establishments.
- Conduct trace back work at retail food establishments.
- Hold or destruction of affected food.
- Informs the public of health threats/risks and appropriate risk reduction measures.
- Exclusion/Restriction of ill food workers.

4.3.2 State government

STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (WSDA)

- Shares food supply threat and vulnerability information with applicable public and private sector entities as appropriate.
- Conducts food supply surveillance, sampling, laboratory testing, complaint investigations, inspections, and environmental assessments/root cause.
- Leads food emergency responses involving but not limited to agricultural inputs (including animal feed and pesticides), farms, manufactured food processors, and food wholesalers/distributors through the Washington Food/Feed Rapid Response Team (RRT).
- Conducts field investigations and implements or oversees control measures consistent with the National Response Framework Emergency Support Function Annexes and the Department of Homeland Security's Core Capabilities; including but not limited to:
    - Sample collection.
    - Trace back/trace forward investigations.
    - Rapid public communication.
    - Control contaminated/adulterated products.
    - Oversight of recalls of affected food or agricultural products and feed.

    - Disposal or reconditioning of affected food and/or agricultural products and feed.
    - Conducting environmental assessment and root cause analyses at facilities associated with food/feed-borne incidents.
    - Oversight of decontamination of affected food facilities, in coordination with appropriate environmental protection agencies.
- Coordinates food emergency response activities as appropriate with:
    - Local, state, federal food regulatory and tribal agencies.
    - The private sector (e.g., producers, manufacturers, food industry associations).
- Conducts laboratory analysis of samples from food and the environment in coordination with DOH Public Health and federal laboratories.
- Collaborates with DOH and applicable federal partners in informing the public of food emergencies and appropriate risk reduction measures in accordance with agency and state emergency communications plans. See 5.2 Public Information.
- Provides interagency/inter-jurisdictional coordination and resource support, as required.
- Partners with FDA on the Washington Food/Feed RRT.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH)

- Supports coordinated epidemiological response to food emergencies, including but not limited to:
    - Disease surveillance.
    - Environmental surveillance assays for marine biotoxins, marine pathogens, and shellfish growing area water quality.
    - Case finding and verification.
    - Case investigation for hypothesis generation.
    - Epidemiologic study design and implementation.
    - Data analysis.
    - Risk reduction/mitigation strategy development.
    - Logistical support.
    - Surge capacity as needed.
- Conducts laboratory analysis of food, environmental, and human clinical specimens associated with an outbreak of human illnesses. Reports relevant results through PulseNet, OutbreakNet, NCBI Submission Portal, and GenomeTrakr (as applicable).
- Supports LHJs with informing the public of health threats/risks and appropriate risk reduction measures in accordance with agency and state emergency communications plans. See Section 5.2 Public Information.
- Supports LHJs in retail food safety.
- Regulates sanitary conditions for shellfish growing, harvesting and processing, and leads shellfish-related outbreak investigations.
- Provides ESF 8 (Public Health and Medical Services) lead agency representation at the SEOC.

WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EMD)

- Provides interagency/inter-jurisdictional coordination and resource support through the SEOC, as required. Operates the SEOC as determined by the situation.
- Provides Joint Information Center support when the SEOC is activated for an emergency.
- Assists WSDA and DOH in the preparation of Governor's Proclamations of Emergency, when the situation warrants.
- Provides EMAC and PNEMA coordination, if out of state resources are required to respond to the incident.

WASHINGTON STATE PATROL (WSP)

- Leads criminal investigation and law enforcement activities.
- Coordinates with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other law enforcement agencies.
- Collects, transports, and analyzes samples collected as part of an investigation into a potentially intentional act. Sample analyses may be performed by state laboratories if requested in writing and agreed upon.
- Upon a Governor's Declaration of Emergency and upon request from the affected jurisdiction, may activate an Incident Management Team (IMT) to support the local law enforcement jurisdiction's management of the incident and incident resources.
- Coordinates law enforcement roadblocks on state and federal highways in any restricted or quarantined areas.
- Assists local and county law enforcement as well as state agencies in gaining access into restricted or quarantined areas.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY (ECY)

- Provides environmental support, particularly technical assistance concerning appropriate waste disposal options.
- Provides coordination support for non-disease related animal carcass disposal.

4.3.3 Federal government

Federal agencies may be involved in any Level of incident. Under the CEMP, federal agencies are considered support agencies to Washington State emergency response, but in some food/feed incidents they instead may be a lead agency with jurisdiction. For some Level 1 incidents, a federal agency may be the only agency responding. For Level 2, 3, and 4 incidents, federal agencies may be part of the Unified Command. Also, federal agencies may be simultaneously leading/coordinating a multi-state response. District/Regional offices and program divisions may be working with the state, while headquarters is coordinating the broader effort.

U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA)

FDA's food safety focus is regulating food production and processing connected to interstate commerce. FDA is also a primary partner with WSDA in the Washington Food/Feed RRT.
In a food emergency, the FDA's role may be to:

- Lead food-related emergency responses involving FDA jurisdiction.
- Investigate to identify implicated products through traceback, trace forward, and other investigational activities.
- Request and assist with product recalls, either voluntary or mandatory. If warranted, it may exercise administrative detention of the implicated product.
- Provide laboratory surge capacity to process an increased volume of food or environmental samples.
- Issue press information, such as consumer advisories and import alerts. See Section 5.2 Public Information.
- Coordinate the FERN in conjunction with USDA/FSIS and state laboratory counterparts.
- Coordinate its investigations with federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners**.**
- Support a criminal investigation. (FDA Office of Criminal Investigations)
- Pursue quick legal action such as a temporary restraining order (TRO), administrative detention, or seizure.
- Pursue administrative action to suspend food facility registration.

- If the emergency spans international borders, FDA is responsible for ensuring safety of food entering the country through import alerts and detentions.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

In a food emergency, the CDC's role may be to:

- Coordinate with federal food regulatory agencies to protect public health by ensuring the safety of the food supply.
- Support state efforts related to public health surveillance, investigation of human illness outbreaks, and monitoring the effectiveness of prevention and control measures.
- Identify laboratory surge capacity through the LRN, FERN, or ICLN.
- Provide confirmatory laboratory testing, bioinformatics support, and characterization of hazardous agents.
- Issue health alerts to state health departments, key healthcare provider networks, and other entities to increase surveillance during periods of increased health risk.
- Release public information regarding foodborne outbreaks.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) mission includes protection of the nation's food supply, including protecting the public from foodborne illness; ensuring that the nation's meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome, and correctly packaged; and ensuring the health and care of plants and animals. USDA-FSIS also coordinates through FERN in conjunction with FDA.

USDA's role in a food emergency response may be to:

- Lead food-related emergency responses involving USDA jurisdiction.
- Assist with disease eradication and food safety threat activities, including epidemiological support, quarantine, evaluation, slaughter, disposal, cleaning and disinfecting, trace back, vector control and transportation permitting arrangements.
- Consult with state and local authorities regarding eradication and food safety threat proceedings.
- Collect, analyze, and disseminate technical and logistical information.
- Issue a declaration of extraordinary emergency if needed.
- Define the infected area and control zones.
- Prepare information for dissemination to the public, producers, processors and other concerned groups.
- Inform the public about meat, poultry and egg product food safety issues. See 5.2 Public Information.
- Allocate funding for compensation to the owner(s) of culled animals.
- Define restrictions on interstate commerce.
- Provide support in a criminal investigation (USDA Office of Inspector General).

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

In a food emergency, the EPA's role may be to:

- Provide environmental support, particularly technical assistance concerning appropriate waste disposal options and adulterant threshold levels.
- Conduct radiological surveillance of sentinel foods (milk, field crops).
- Regulate pesticide use and labeling.

- Provide environmental protection support from the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, the Office of Pesticide Programs, and the Office of Water, depending on the nature of the incident.
- Potential lab support, depending on nature of incident.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS)

In a food emergency, the DHS's role may be to:

- Help provide guidance on prevention and preparedness related to bioterrorism/agroterrorism.
- Assist with coordination during response.
- Coordinate with Customs and Border Patrol regarding import alerts and detentions.
- Assist with financial, logistical, and guidance support for recovery.
- Support the response as appropriate.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI)

- Lead criminal investigation when it is determined that an incident is the result of intentional contamination/adulteration and/or potential terrorism.

4.3.4 Tribal authorities

The individual tribal governments are responsible for coordinating tribal resources relative to all potential types of incidents or responses, including (but not limited to):

- Food-related emergency responses.
- Food safety investigations on tribal lands.
- Communication with tribal members, businesses, and other entities to assist with incident response and recovery.
- Coordinating with federal response partners, as required and desired.

4.3.5 Canadian government

For food emergency incidents that cross the border, the Canadian government will likely coordinate with the FDA or USDA as required. If necessary, a liaison(s) may be exchanged between the Unified Command and CFIA and/or Health Canada to better coordinate the response. In some cases, local, and regional provincial authorities may be involved.

4.3.6 Non-governmental organizations

Depending on the nature of the incident, non-governmental organizations may offer or be asked to provide the following:

- Information and technical expertise
- Supplies and equipment
- Displaced person/animal support
- Laboratory access
- Transportation
- Space for incident command, operations
- Volunteer coordination
- Donation coordination

5. Communication

5.1 PROTOCOL BETWEEN RESPONSE ORGANIZATIONS

Communication between response organizations will be handled through pre-authorized channels and those established under ICS. These include:

- Existing public health communication tools (health provider alerts, LHJ communication system), utilized as appropriate.
- Daily incident briefings (or more frequent as necessary).
- Situation Reports/Incident Action Plans developed by the Washington RRT and/or SEOC.
- Use of FoodSHIELD or other secure information technology platform.
- Governor's office.

Each agency is responsible for developing its own agency communication protocols.

A contact list for primary and key support entities is included in the *Washington State Food Protection Task Force Food Emergency Response Resource Guide*. **The list must be updated annually**.

Each entity represented on the list is responsible for updating its information as necessary. WSDA is responsible for annually checking with those agencies that the information is current and accurate.

5.2 PUBLIC INFORMATION

To develop and distribute clear and consistent public messaging for Level 2, 3, and 4 incidents that are under a Unified Command, a JIC will be established for the entire food/feed incident. All involved agencies, academia, and industry will be invited to be represented in the JIC. In some cases, the JIC may be a "virtual JIC" where the participants are not co-located.

- The JIC handles on-scene media (if able) and public inquiries, emergency public information and warnings. It monitors public perception and response, media monitoring, and other functions.
- The JIC coordinates, clears with appropriate authorities, and disseminates accurate and timely information related to the incident, particularly regarding information on public health and safety, and protection.
    - Certain investigational/response information may be pre-decisional, commercial confidential, or trade secret. Information releases should be reviewed by all participating response agencies prior to dissemination.
- The JIC will prepare a communications plan to guide information content and delivery in the emergency, including overall and specific communications objectives, key issues, and public messages.
- If the SEOC is activated, a JIC will be established through ESF-15 (External Affairs), and the Incident JIC will coordinate with the JIC at the SEOC.