

Office of the Surgeon General – Emergency Preparedness

About

The LDH Emergency Preparedness Section works closely with LDH Offices, Bureaus, Programs, and Sections to maintain a coordinated response within the department as well as with external partners.

Disaster Response Framework

Given catastrophic disasters in Louisiana’s recent history, the state has adopted and implemented the United States National Response Framework (NRF). The NRF is the basis of the National Strategy for Homeland Security that presents guiding principles for domestic response partners to prepare for and provide a unified response to disasters and emergencies.

Incident Command and Emergency Support Functions

Under the NRF, all state agencies are prescribed an emergency response function. The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is assigned:

- Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 – Public Health and Medical Response
- Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services (transition effective December 1, 2025)

During a disaster, all ESFs fall under the incident command structure coordinated by the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security (GOHSEP). Conference calls, situational reports, and logistics are coordinated to prevent duplication of effort.

The scope of LDH’s daily services—including policy, budget, and personnel—directly contributes to the state’s ability to respond to disasters.

Transition of ESF-6

Currently, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) oversees shelter operations under Emergency Support Function 6 (Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services).

- Effective December 1, 2025, ESF-6 sheltering responsibilities will transition from DCFS to the LDH Office of the Surgeon General.

This transition strengthens integration of public health, medical response, and sheltering services under LDH leadership.

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Regional Coordination

The state of Louisiana is divided into nine regions. Each region has an ESF-8 Health and Medical Structure supported by federal grant funds. These regional networks include:

- Public Health Regional Leadership Teams
- Hospital Designated Regional Coordinators
- EMS Designated Regional Coordinators
- Healthcare partners and stakeholders

The regional ESF-8 networks coordinate care (patient movement), assets (bed availability), and resources (security, pharmaceuticals, sheltering care, and case management) at both state and regional levels.

During a disaster, the nine ESF-8 regions report to the State ESF-8 through scheduled calls and formal requests in the WebEOC system.

Operational Activities

- Shelters: LDH employees are deployed to staff state-operated shelters and Emergency Operations Centers.
- Federal Disaster Teams: EP personnel coordinate with federal and out-of-state teams to address Louisiana’s healthcare infrastructure gaps.
- Funding:
 - State General Funds – limited funding available.
 - Federal Grants – primary support through the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Grant, which sustain Louisiana’s incident management and disaster response systems.