

Comparison of ESF #5 (Canada) and ESF #8 (U.S.) - Abstract

Both Canada and the United States have adopted national emergency response systems that incorporate the use of Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). ESFs provide the mechanisms for grouping functions most frequently used in providing Federal support to states, provinces, territories and other Federal departments and agencies prior to or during an emergency.

ESFs describe the roles and responsibilities of Federal departments and agencies, and are allocated to Federal government institutions in a manner consistent with their respective mandates, policies and legislation. While the ESF architecture used in the United States and Canada is similar, there are significant and important variations between the two countries where the delivery of public health, medical and human services is concerned.

In Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada is assigned the lead for ESF #5 of the Federal Emergency Response Plan, "Public Health and Essential Human Services." In the U.S. National Response Framework, the Department of Health and Human Services is assigned as the ESF Coordinator as well as the primary agency for ESF #8, "Public Health and Medical Services." In this session, the two complementary ESFs will be compared and contrasted to provide an analysis of the similarities and differences regarding their scope, concepts of operations and delivery arrangements, and the session will also highlight any perceived gaps in emergency planning in the public health and medical fields.

Participants at this session will gain a better understanding of the ESF concepts in both countries, as well as learn how the two ESFs are expected to interact during a cross-border emergency where public health, medical, and human services aspects are involved. In addition, both countries are in the beginning stages of working out the details of how both medical personnel and medical countermeasures could be shared with the other country.

An update on this work will also be presented in the context of each countries' ESF.

Presentation Objectives:

1. Recite an understanding of how ESFs in Canada and the U.S. are structured regarding the Federal response to public health, medical, and human services aspects of an emergency in each country.
2. List ESF resources used in Canada and the United States and how they may augment and support the primary Federal government programs, arrangements and other measures used to deliver ESFs.
3. Explain how the Canadian and U.S. ESF resources and assets are deployed and utilized in the event of a cross-border emergency.