



Digital Volunteer Program Guide

Science and Technology Directorate

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**Homeland
Security**

Science and Technology

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- [Social Media Engagement Strategies](#)²³
- [VEMA Offerings](#)²⁴

²³ "Social Media Engagement Strategies (PER-343)." *NDPTC*, <https://bit.ly/2KUsF5S>. Accessed 12 June 2018.

²⁴ "Upcoming Events." *Virtual EMA*, <http://www.virtualema.org/events>. Accessed 12 June 2018.

3.0 Digital Volunteer Standard Operating Procedure Template Guidance

This step provides critical thinking exercises and guidance to help users complete the Digital Volunteer SOP Template. **Users are encouraged to download, complete, and/or modify the SOP Template in a way that suits their organization's needs.** Clear SOPs improve coordination across volunteers and staff, create efficiencies, minimize errors, and regulate routine tasks. Standard procedures allow public safety officials to focus on the most critical activities throughout each phase of deployment (Pre-deployment, Activation, Deployment, Deactivation, and Post-Deployment).

3.1 Purpose

The Purpose section of the Digital Volunteer SOP Template should provide a brief description of the SOP purpose and describe why the SOP is required. Throughout SOP development, refer to this purpose statement to ensure alignment. When filling out the Purpose section of the SOP Template, consider the following:

1. What is the objective of the SOP? (e.g., create a consistent approach to leveraging digital volunteers, improve EOC effectiveness when responding to a major incident)
2. Who will be using the SOP? (e.g., EOC command staff, digital volunteers)

3.2 Scope

The Scope section of the Digital Volunteer SOP Template should list participating agencies and jurisdictions. Throughout SOP development, refer to this scope to ensure alignment. When filling out the Scope section of the SOP Template, consider the following:

1. What participating agencies and jurisdictions should be included in this SOP?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of participating agencies and jurisdictions?
3. Are there existing agreements (e.g., MOUs) in place among agencies?
4. What is the chain of command among participating agencies and jurisdictions? (e.g., Volunteer Team Leader reports directly to the EOC Operations Branch Chief)
5. What are the terms to enact the SOP? (e.g., natural or man-made disaster, planned events)

3.3 Pre-deployment

The Pre-deployment section of the Digital Volunteer SOP Template should describe the process for establishing relationships with digital volunteers and identifying volunteer capabilities. It is imperative that Incident Decision Makers and the Agency Volunteer Manager understand how to utilize digital volunteer abilities prior to activation in order to improve operational flow and the effective delegation of tasks. When filling out the Pre-Deployment section of the SOP Template, consider the following:

1. Are other organizations in your region integrating digital volunteers into operations?
2. If yes, what are their lessons learned?

Common Roles

- Incident Decision Makers
- Agency Volunteer Manager
- Agency Training Coordinator
- Volunteer Team Leader
- Team Members

1. What are the technical and/or operational characteristics of the partnership? Consider including definitions for each. (e.g., incident, emergency support functions)
2. Are there any community-specific terms or acronyms? Consider including definitions for each.

Example Definitions

Disaster: For the purpose of this MOU, a disaster is a natural or human-made event of such destructive magnitude as to suddenly dislocate the public; damage or destroy homes; and/or cause injury, illness, and death.

Hotwash: For the purpose of this MOU, a hotwash is a meeting held post-exercise or incident to collect initial volunteer and EOC staff feedback. As part of the meeting, participants discuss what went well and what improvements are needed to improve future response.

4.3 Scope

The Scope section of the Digital Volunteer MOU Template should list the organizations to be included in the agreement and describe their relationship, including POC information. In more detailed MOUs, some practitioners recommend including the roles and responsibilities for each phase of deployment (Pre-deployment, Activation, Deployment, Deactivation, and Post-Deployment). For common roles and responsibilities, refer to “How to Develop a Digital Volunteer Program Strategy” (Section 1.2).

Example Roles and Responsibilities

1. Upon the request of **[Organization One]**, **[Organization Two]** will activate if it has the capacity and availability.
2. Both **[Organization One]** and **[Organization Two]** will jointly participate in at least two SMEM trainings, exercises and other developmental opportunities per year to improve response coordination and cooperation.

4.4 Relevant Laws

The Relevant Laws section of the Digital Volunteer MOU Template should reference any applicable federal, state and local laws relevant to the MOU, especially when partnering with an external organization. For more information on common legal considerations to take into account, refer to the S&T Social Media Business Case Guide (Section 1.2). When filling out the Relevant Laws section of the MOU Template, consider the following:

1. Which local laws may affect your partnership and/or use of digital volunteers?
2. Which state laws may affect your partnership and/or use of digital volunteers?
3. Which federal laws may affect your partnership and/or use of digital volunteers?
4. When should you engage your agency’s legal counsel as part of planning?

4.5 Updates to the MOU

The Updates to the MOU section of the Digital Volunteer MOU Template should describe the process and frequency of MOU updates. It is a best practice to review and update a MOU at

least annually, although some practitioners review the MOU after each activation. When filling out the Updates section in the MOU Template, consider the following:

1. Who has the authority to update the MOU?
2. What type of updates will require input (or signatures) of all parties?
3. How will lessons learned be incorporated into the MOU after a joint activation?
4. How will POCs be notified about updates? (e.g., informal call, email, formal memo)

4.6 Agreement

In the Agreement section of the Digital Volunteer MOU Template, authorized representatives of each party execute the MOU and certify that they have read, understood and agree to the terms and conditions.

Tools	Purpose	Value
Highlight common activation tools	Describe the tool's purpose	Describe the tool's value

Roles and Responsibilities:

Describe the associated roles and responsibilities for alerting digital volunteers of an incident and activating available volunteers to conduct the mission and objectives.

Deployment

Describe digital volunteer deployment procedures (e.g., reporting, briefings, shifts) and activities (e.g., social media monitoring, message amplification) for all common incidents in detail. Highlight common tools in the table below.

Tools	Purpose	Value
Highlight common deployment tools	Describe the tool's purpose	Describe the tool's value

Roles and Responsibilities:

Describe the associated roles and responsibilities for deployment activities.

Deactivation

Describe the procedure for concluding operations (e.g., archive) and volunteer efforts (e.g., data sharing). Highlight common tools in the table below.

Tools	Purpose	Value
Highlight common deactivation tools	Describe the tool's purpose	Describe the tool's value

Roles and Responsibilities:

Describe the associated roles and responsibilities for concluding operations and volunteer efforts.

Post-deployment

Describe the procedure for managing volunteer incident data (e.g., archive) and conducting an After-Action Review to identify, document, and learn from successes and failures. Highlight common tools in the table below.

Tools	Purpose	Value
Highlight common deactivation tools	Describe the tool's purpose	Describe the tool's value

Roles and Responsibilities:

Describe the associated roles and responsibilities for managing incident data and conducting an After-Action Review.

Digital Volunteer Memorandum of Understanding Template

[Organization One] and [Organization Two]

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to define the working relationship between [Organization One] and [Organization Two] when using digital volunteers to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. Both parties intend to focus digital volunteer activities around the following objectives:

Objective One	Define partnership objectives.
Objective Two	
Objective Three	

These objectives will be achieved in accordance with procedures as outlined in the [list all relevant organizational Standard Operating Procedures].

Definitions

Include definitions for terms that are subject to varying interpretation.

Scope

This Digital Volunteer MOU includes [Organization One] and [Organization Two]. MOU participants agree to engage and collaborate on the following activities:

[Organization One] will:

1. Describe the parties' roles and responsibilities for the MOU.
- 2.
- 3.

[Organization Two] will:

1. Describe the parties' roles and responsibilities for the MOU.
- 2.
- 3.

[Organization One] and [Organization Two] will:

1. Describe shared roles and responsibilities between parties for the MOU.
- 2.
- 3.

The table below outlines key points of contact from each organization.

	[Organization One]	[Organization Two]
Representative Name		
Representative Title		
Mailing Address		
Phone Number		
Fax Number		
Email Address		

Relevant Laws

Reference any applicable Federal, state, and local laws relevant to the MOU.

Updates to the MOU

Representatives of [Organization One] and [Organization Two] will meet [Time Frame] (e.g., annually) to evaluate the MOU and revise and/or create new plans, as appropriate. This MOU may be modified upon the mutual, written consent of the parties.

Agreement

This MOU expresses the mutual understandings of [Organization One] and [Organization Two] and is not a legally binding document. This MOU shall be effective on [Effective Date] and remain in effect until [Termination Date]. The term may be extended by written agreement of the parties or terminated, in writing, by either member at any time.

[Organization One]

[Organization Two]

Representative Name and Title

Representative Name and Title

Date

Date