

## Training Guidance for Pandemics

**Situation:** As we move forward in a COVID-19 environment, emergency management training will remain of utmost importance. The classroom and methods of course delivery will have to be reevaluated and redefined. Many of the course deliveries offered have group activities as part of the course objective requirements, which are vital in the successful completion of course material. The delivery of course content and the completion of course objectives will remain the primary training goal. Instructors and course managers will be expected to ensure that this goal is met with all course deliveries.

Historically, SCEMD has required a minimum of 12 student participants for State supported “G” classes to ensure the quality of delivery and justify the expense of instructor time and material. This requirement is waived for the foreseeable future. What is not waived is the requirement to successfully complete course objectives. As an example, hazardous material courses, search and rescue, and some incident command courses require a specific number of students to successfully complete activity objectives. Instructors must ensure objectives are met within the standard defined in course material and training guidelines.

To retain successful completion of course objectives while operating in the COVID-19 environment, the SCEMD training section has reviewed and worked to implement the CDC and SCDHEC guidelines. This guidance will be shared with SCEMD students and instructors. These guidelines are intended to keep student participants, instructors, and all in the emergency management training community safe.

**Implementation:** Going forward we will define the classroom in three delivery methods. The first will be a totally internet web-based course delivery. The second is a traditional classroom with modifications. The third is a hybrid type delivery.

- Delivery Method One – Web-based: Web-based conference software such as WebEx or Microsoft Teams will be utilized to deliver the course to students. This method fits well with the traditional lecture based or seminar instruction. As an example, New County Director and Staff Workshop (NCDSW) is instruction that can be delivered in this manner. In addition to the instructor, another staff member should be utilized to run the conferencing system and support troubleshooting.
- Delivery Method Two – Traditional classroom with modifications: This method is set in the traditional classroom; however, the classroom will be modified to follow current social distancing practices and CDC guidelines. The training safety guidelines are defined below. Off-site course deliveries in the counties projected for this delivery method are required to also submit a plan for adhering to the guidelines. Course hosts are expected to provide appropriate PPE and sanitizer for participants. Outstanding needs must be submitted through the SCEMD Training section at least two weeks prior to course delivery.
  - While observing the CDC guidelines, the expectation is that masks will be available to and worn by both instructors and students, social distance guidance will be observed, and classes will be appropriately sized according to conservative social distancing guidance.
  - Class size will be adjusted based on the size of the room the class is scheduled for and number of students attending. Current social distancing guidelines for occupancy will be followed. For example, following the 6 foot rule, the SCEMD Training Room capacity is normally 32 occupants; however, moving forward only 12 people are allowed to be trained in that room.

- **Delivery Method Three – Hybrid:** The third method is a hybrid of one and two. The course would be conducted in-person with students in attendance as well as conferenced in via a web-based platform such as WebEx or Microsoft Teams. Group activity requirements should follow delivery method two guidelines.

**Guidelines:** These training safety guidelines address actions to ensure individual protections are in place, while also achieving course objectives. The following are the baseline COVID-19 training safety requirements and will be used in ALL SCEMD training opportunities.

- Social distancing will be required. Student participants and instructors are required to be seated at least six feet apart, to include during group work.
- Class size will be adjusted to allow for social distancing based on the size of the spacing being used for instruction.
- Temperatures will be taken for instructors and all participants prior to entry into building.
- Masks will be available and used per CDC guidelines.
- Hand sanitizer will be available.
- Hand washing options will be available.
- Classroom space will be cleaned daily prior to the start of training.
- No paper handouts will be provided. Books and handouts will be provided electronically for the students to print should they desire.
- No group bathroom breaks, students may break as they need.
- Coffee may not be provided.
- Student and Instructors guidance:
  - If you are sick – stay home
  - Cover your mouth during a sneeze or cough
  - Wash hands after using the bathroom, blowing your nose, coughing, and sneezing
  - Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes etc.
- Current CDC and SCDHEC guidelines will be followed.
- If, after attending a course, you are found to have symptoms, please report it to the Training Manager for proper notifications.

Large events, mass gatherings and training events can contribute to the spread of COVID-19. Trainees from out-of-state could increase the spread of the virus in some communities. As such, the training section will consider out of state course student participants upon establishing an assurance that the threat of transmission is no greater than that of the in-state threat of transmission.

In general, the following points should be considered:

- **The overall number of attendees.** Larger gatherings offer more opportunities for person-to-person contact and therefore pose greater risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- **The density of attendees within a confined area.** Based on what is currently known about the virus, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (6 feet).
- **The number of people attending who are at greater risk of more serious illness after contracting COVID-19.** Older adults and persons with severe pre-existing health conditions are thought to be at increased risk.
- **Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>).