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CECW-HS

**Emergency Employment of Army and Other Resources  
Emergency Management Continuous Improvement Program – Procedures**

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FOR THE COMMANDER:

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COL, EN  
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**Purpose.** This pamphlet outlines standard processes and procedures for the management and execution of the Emergency Management Continuous Improvement Program, formerly known as the Corps of Engineers Remedial Action Program under the authorities of 33 USC 701n (commonly referred to as Public Law 84-99) and as prescribed in Section 4-3.k., ER 500-1-1, and Section 4.18, After-Action Report and Procedures, EP 500-1-1.

**Applicability.** This pamphlet applies to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deployable and reachback capabilities that respond to civil emergencies both under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authorities and in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, supported and supporting Major Subordinate Commands and districts, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters elements under the Directorate of Contingency Operations and Office of Homeland Security, Major Subordinate Command Readiness and Contingency Operations offices, and District Emergency Management Offices.

**Distribution Statement.** Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited.

**Proponent and Exception Authority.** The proponent of this pamphlet is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works – Office of Homeland Security. The proponent has the authority to approve exceptions or waivers to this pamphlet that are consistent with controlling law and regulations. Only the proponent of a publication or form may modify it by officially revising or rescinding it.

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## **Glossary of Terms**

## **1. Purpose.**

This pamphlet outlines standard processes and procedures for the management and execution of the Emergency Management Continuous Improvement Program (EMcip), formerly known as the Corps of Engineers Remedial Action Program (CERAP or RAP) under the authorities of 33 USC 701n (commonly referred to as Public Law [P.L.] 84-99) and as prescribed in Section 4-3.k., ER 500-1-1, and Section 4.18, After-Action Report and Procedures, EP 500-1-1.

## **2. Distribution statement.**

Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited.

## **3. References.**

See Appendix A.

## **4. Records management (recordkeeping) requirements.**

The records management requirement for all record numbers, associated forms, and reports required by this publication are addressed in the Army Records Retention Schedule – Army (RRS-A). Detailed information for all related record numbers is located in the Army Records Information Management System (ARIMS)/RRS-A at <https://www.arims.army.mil>. If any record numbers, forms, and reports are not current, addressed, and/or published correctly in ARIMS/RRS-A, see Department of the Army (DA) Pamphlet 25-403, Guide to Recordkeeping in the Army, for guidance.

## **5. Program overview.**

a. EMcip's goal is to align people, policy, and process in order to drive improved performance that supports the goals and culture of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The program's mission is to implement a deliberate continuous improvement process for USACE's disaster preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Relevant activities include emergency response to natural disasters authorized by P.L. 84-99, support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the National Response Framework and National Disaster Recovery Framework, and support of Department of Defense (DoD) installations.

b. The program ensures that lessons learned and best practices from contingency operations and events as well as national level exercises are incorporated into standard operating procedures, doctrine, and training. The goal of this is to improve program execution before, during, and after disaster and contingency responses. EMcip facilitates a knowledge sharing culture within USACE Emergency Management and champions enterprise commitment to continual learning, knowledge sharing, adaptability, and process improvements that support national readiness, modernize USACE and emergency management mission execution, improve and strengthen partner relationships, and revolutionize program delivery.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities.**

a. After-Action Reviews, initial assessments of lessons learned, and best practices for contingency events are conducted at the applicable Major Subordinate Command (MSC) and district levels which subsequently provide enterprise-level change recommendations to Headquarters USACE (HQUSACE).

b. The Readiness Support Center (RSC) maintains oversight and management of EMcip and coordinates with HQUSACE to assess and implement enterprise-level changes to doctrine and training that impact the enterprise and/or more than one MSC.

## 7. Emergency Management Continuous Improvement Program events.

a. An EMcip event is defined as an incident or exercise in which a formal After-Action Report is required.

b. As stipulated in EP 500-1-1, paragraph 4-18, events which require formal After-Action Reports are those events that meet one of the following three triggers:

(1) Any event involving over \$500,000 in total Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE) appropriation expenditures, excluding investigations, after-action expenses, and Category 300 activities.

(2) Any event with FCCE Category 300 expenditures in excess of \$1,000,000.

(3) Any other event when directed by an MSC or HQUSACE.

## 8. Emergency Management Continuous Improvement Program model.

The EMcip model, shown in Figure 1, begins with an identified EMcip Event. The model includes four phases: Discovery, Validation, Resolution, and Evaluation, aligned and in compliance with FEMA National Continuous Improvement Guidance. Strategies and methods used during each phase are variable based on circumstances/needs at the time. Each phase is discussed in paragraphs 9, 10, 11, and 12 below.

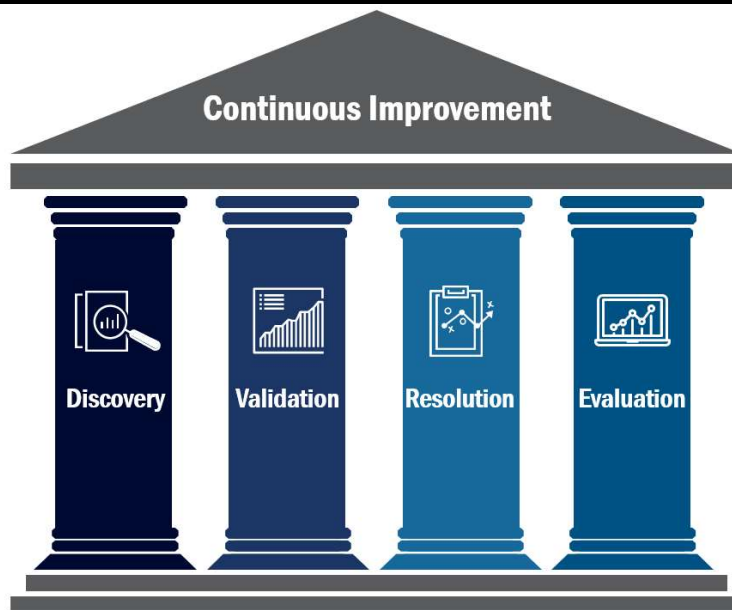


Figure 1. The EMcip model

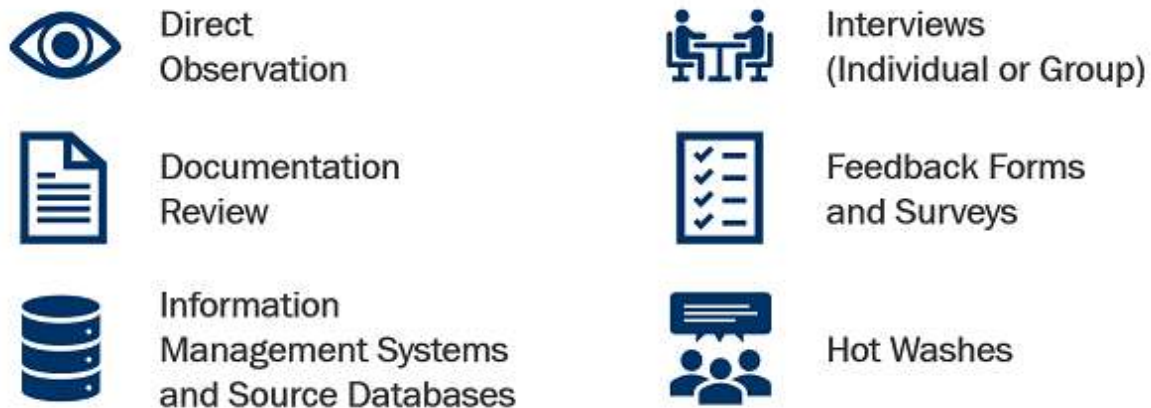
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## 9. Model phase I – Discovery phase and activities.

a. The first phase in the continuous improvement process is Discovery. The purpose of the Discovery Phase is to collect information from an incident that will be used later to identify strengths, areas for improvement, potential best practices, and

mission critical issues. These strengths, areas for improvement, potential best practices, and mission critical issues should then be used to identify trends across incidents.

b. Planning and organizing data collection are crucial first steps to ensuring effective use of the information collected. Data collection is an ongoing process both during and after an incident. Every USACE disaster responder, regardless of their role, may contribute information that helps identify both critical issues and successful practices that can improve future responses. All responders should be encouraged to document issues as they occur. The Supported District and MSC must plan and select the methods they will use to collect after-action data. A variety of data collection methods are available, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Data collection methods**

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c. The EMcip Program Manager (PM) may also facilitate additional data collection methods for Supported Districts and MSCs, including virtual whiteboards, online responder surveys, and, at the direction of HQUSACE, the assembly of an Independent Assistance and Assessment Team (IAAT).

(1) Virtual After-Action Whiteboards: Upon the receipt of initial Class 210 funding provided for the activation of a District's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the EMcip PM will create an online "virtual after-action whiteboard" for the supported District/MSCs use to capture and categorize after-action comments and feedback from responders and support personnel throughout an event. The EMcip PM will provide the link to the virtual whiteboard to the supported District/MSCs for their use as desired.

(2) Online Responder Survey: The EMcip PM and supported Districts/MSCs will coordinate as applicable and appropriate to implement an online form for a specific event to capture after-action feedback and comments from responders and event support personnel.

(3) Independent Assistance and Assessment Team: For larger, more complex events, as applicable, HQUSACE may elect to activate an IAAT to assist with progressive data collection during an event. The scope of IAAT includes additional tasks specified at the time of its activation. The IAAT provides an independent assessment of ongoing USACE emergency/contingency operations, identifies lessons learned and successes from the perspective of engaged Commands, customers, and partners, and

codifies lessons learned and best practices for use in future operations. The process includes interviews with the supported MSC and District Commanders and key persons at the FEMA and State response nodes. The IAAT will consolidate and analyze interview trends to compile a report of their findings. This report will feed into the formal After-Action Review for the event and the subsequent formal After-Action Report.

#### **10. Model phase II – Validation phase and activities.**

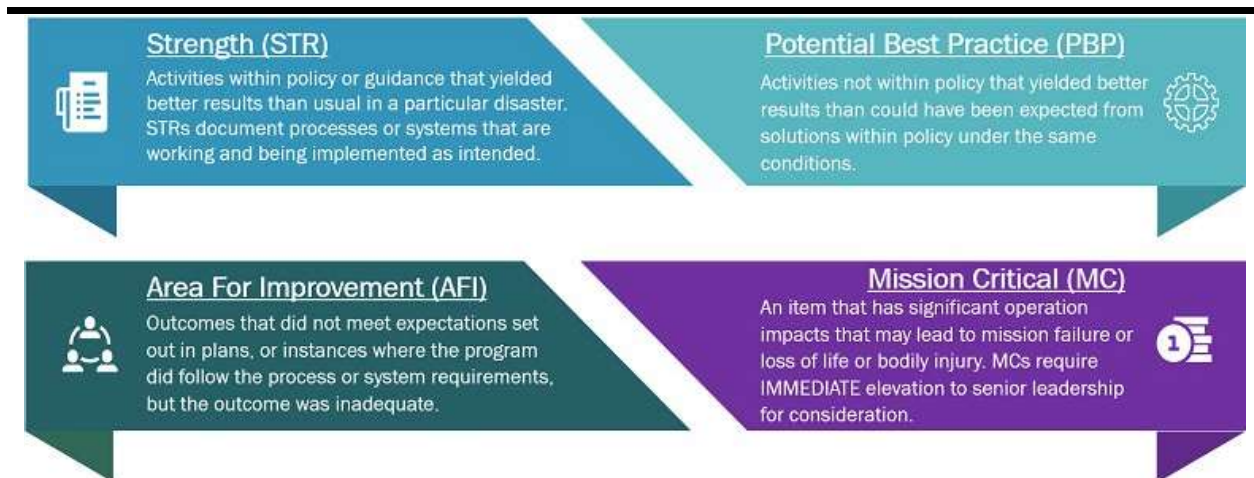
a. The Validation Phase includes analyzing data, identifying key findings, and developing observations. During Validation, personnel analyze the collected data to identify and ensure the accuracy of observations and potential recommended actions. Validation is also when personnel must determine whether additional data is needed to demonstrate the effect of the observation.

b. Supported District Emergency Management (EM) Offices and/or MSC Readiness and Contingency Operations (RCO) Offices must determine the validity and reliability of data during the Validation phase. Validity refers to the correctness and reasonableness of information. Reliability refers to the degree to which data is reasonably complete and accurate, meets the intended purposes, and is not subject to inappropriate alteration. Data may not be valid if it does not represent the desired population, is misinterpreted, and/or there are errors and gaps in the data (for example, if respondents do not have the desired knowledge, have a reason not to tell the truth, or choose not to respond).

c. Data collected and analyzed can be communicated through written observations, which explains what occurred and provides supporting evidence. An observation is a written summary of a strength, potential best practice, area for improvement, or mission critical issue derived from collected and validated data.

d. Observations from an incident are independent summaries of information and can be compiled into an report or used to inform the development of other continuous improvement products. Typically, observations are topics or issues that are identified multiple times during data collection and have demonstrable operational effect. Collecting observations is important for the consistent identification of trends or issues observed during the lifecycle of an incident.

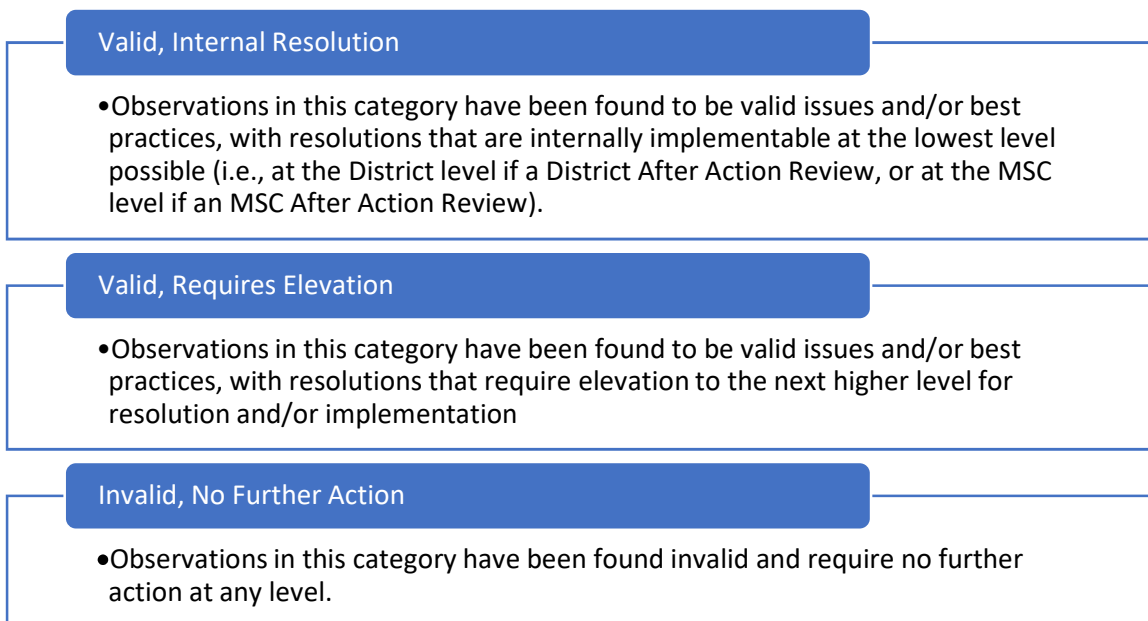
e. Each observation should identify what happened and the effect, demonstrate a significant positive or negative effect to the success of the organization's mission, and identify recommendations for improvement. There are four types of observations, as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Types of observations**

f. After drafting the observation, the observation should be shared with subject-matter experts, including interviewees, hotwash participants, focus group participants, and/or survey respondents who have knowledge about the observation. These subject-matter experts should review the observation to ensure that it is correct. After-Action Reviews are an important tool used to validate observations.

g. Following major events, field elements must conduct an After-Action Review session to discuss operation successes and lessons learned. After-Action Review sessions may be requested by Divisions or Districts, may be at the request of HQUSACE, or combined with a joint FEMA-USACE session. Requested funding for costs of After-Action Review sessions reflect FCCE Class 220 funds. The goal of the After-Action Review should be the validation of issues and best practices identified, observed, and documented during the Discovery Phase. Ultimately, Districts and/or MSCs should use the After-Action Review to discuss and categorize all observations documented during progressive data collection into three distinct categories, as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4. Observation validation categories**

## **11. Model phase III – Resolution phase and activities.**

During the Resolution Phase, recommended actions that were drafted during the observation development process are finalized, tracked, and implemented. Major outputs of the Resolution Phase include After-Action Reports, Quick Look Reports, Corrective Action Plans (at the District and MSC levels), Action Planning Workshops and meetings, and updated plans, Standard Operating Procedures, training documents, and other products.

a. After-Action Reports. All After-Action Reports begin with the supported District(s). Formal, written After-Action Reports are always required at the Supported District level for an EMcip Event.

(1) The After-Action Report is a written report that provides a consolidated summary of disaster operations, interagency coordination, and key validated observations, and lessons learned.

(2) The suggested After-Action Report template is found on the EMcip SharePoint site (<https://usace.dps.mil/sites/EM/SitePages/EMcip.aspx>). This template may be further modified based on District/MSD discretion to fit the circumstances of a particular event.

(3) Supported Districts must provide their final, written After-Action Reports through their respective MSC to CECW-HS and the Readiness Support Center within 60 days after a supported District EOC activation level returns to normal operations.

(4) If the majority of response and recovery operations are complete but the EOC remains activated for an enduring recovery mission (for example, a long-duration temporary housing mission or similar), the Supported District may exclude that enduring mission from the main report and provide an addendum when the enduring mission is physically complete, in order to complete the main report in a more timely manner.



(5) The EMcip PM will share the report with the EM Community of Practice and post the final report in ENGLink, as the historical database of record for the event, as well as on the EMcip SharePoint site

(<https://usace.dps.mil/sites/EM/SitePages/EMcip.aspx>)

(6) USACE will provide copies of the final report to other agencies and organizations as appropriate and requested. MSCs may consolidate multi-District events into a single report as applicable and appropriate.

(7) Supported District EM Offices and/or MSC RCO Offices must determine the validity and reliability of data during the Validation phase. Validity refers to the correctness and reasonableness of information. Reliability refers to the degree to which data is reasonably complete and accurate, meets the intended purposes, and is not subject to inappropriate alteration. Data may not be valid if it does not represent the desired population, is misinterpreted, and/or there are errors and gaps in the data (for example, if respondents do not have the desired knowledge, have a reason not to tell the truth, or choose not to respond).

*b.* Quick Look Reports. A Quick Look Report (QLR) is a time-sensitive document that may precede a full After-Action Report or replace a full After-Action Report for smaller events that do not meet the formal After-Action Report triggers and highlight major findings or high-priority issues from an After-Action Review that require attention.

(1) Generally, a QLR does not contain analysis with as much detail as what would be found in an After-Action Report. A QLR should include a description of the document's purpose, a brief event overview, description of the methodology and scope of data collection and analysis, preliminary findings, recommended actions, and a conclusion.

(2) A QLR is used to inform senior leaders, decision-makers, and program areas about major findings requiring attention. A QLR should be produced quickly post-incident following data collection, within approximately one month.

(3) A suggested QLR template can be found on the EMcip SharePoint site (<https://usace.dps.mil/sites/EM/SitePages/EMcip.aspx>).

*c.* Corrective action plans and action planning workshops

(1) Districts and MSCs should outline their corrective action plans to address internal issues and recommended actions identified during the Validation Phase. Recommended actions captured in the After Action Review, After Action Report, and/or Corrective Action Plan should be tracked at the District and/or MSC level and continually reported internally until completion.

(2) During the Resolution Phase, the USACE EM Community of Practice may hold one or more Action Planning Workshops to socialize validated enterprise observations and to develop and finalize appropriate recommended actions to be included in an EMcip (enterprise-level) Action Plan. The progress of all EMcip Action Plan items will be tracked through the program, with status updates provided at least twice a year or upon request.

## **12. Model phase IV – Evaluation phase and activities.**

*a.* The Evaluation Phase measures the effects of completed recommended actions to determine the extent they have strengthened the organization, institutionalized best practices, addressed areas for improvement, and/or resolved

mission-critical issues. The Evaluation Phase refers to the evaluation of a specific implemented action; it does not refer to a full program evaluation, nor does it refer to exercise evaluation.

*b.* The Evaluation Phase begins after a discrete recommended action is marked complete during the issue resolution process. During the Evaluation Phase, Districts and MSCs can measure the effects of completed recommended actions using various methods, including data collection during steady state, assessment of similar future incidents, and/or assessment of exercise data.

## Appendix A References

### Section I

#### Required Publications

Unless otherwise indicated, all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers publications are available on the USACE website at <https://publications.usace.army.mil>. Army publications are available on the Army Publishing Directorate website at <https://armypubs.army.mil>. DoD Publications are available on the ESD website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil>.

#### **AR 11-33**

Army Lessons Learned Program

#### **EP 500-1-1**

Civil Emergency Management Program - Procedures

#### **ER 11-1-320**

Civil Works Emergency Management Programs

#### **ER 500-1-1**

Civil Emergency Management Program

#### **Emergency Management Continuous Improvement SharePoint Site**

(Available at <https://usace.dps.mil/sites/EM/SitePages/EMcip.aspx>)

#### **PL 84-99**

Emergency Response to Natural Disasters (Available at <https://uscode.house.gov>)

#### **42 USC 5121**

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Available at <https://uscode.house.gov>)

#### **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Continuous Improvement Guidance**

(Available at <https://preptoolkit.fema.gov>)

### Section II

#### Prescribed Forms

This section contains no entries.

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **After-Action Report**

An After-Action Report is a written report that provides a consolidated summary of disaster operations, interagency coordination, and key validated observations, and lessons learned.

### **After-Action Review**

An After-Action Review is a verbal discussion held at the completion of an operation or event with key participants to determine what happened, what worked, what did not work, and how to improve for the next event.

### **DCO**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Directorate of Contingency Operations. The Directorate of Contingency Operations provides command and control of USACE civil and military contingency operations during disaster incident response and recovery; ensures the readiness of critical teams and equipment; leads the development of contingency doctrine and plans in support of interagency partners and both Combatant and Service Component Commands; oversees execution of current operations and planning for future operations; provides oversight of the command's force protection and physical security program; and monitors intelligence operations that support contingency plans development and execution.

### **EMcip**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Emergency Management Continuous Improvement Program, a program which implements a deliberate continuous improvement process for USACE's emergency response to natural disasters authorized by Public Law 84-99, support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the National Response Framework and National Disaster Recovery Framework, and support of DoD installations.

### **FCCE**

Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies Appropriation, which provides funding for authorized activities under Public Law 84-99

### **Hotwash**

A hotwash is an informal review of issues and ideas conducted during a longer event or immediately after an event to identify strengths and weaknesses of the response.

### **IAAT**

Independent Assistance and Assessment Team. When activated by HQ, the IAAT provides an independent assessment of ongoing USACE emergency/contingency operations, identifies lessons learned and successes from the perspective of engaged Commands, customers, and partners, and codifies lessons learned and best practices for use in future operations.

**MSC**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Major Subordinate Commands, also known as Divisions. USACE MSCs include the North Atlantic Division, South Atlantic Division, Transatlantic Division, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, Mississippi Valley Division, Southwestern Division, Northwestern Division, South Pacific Division, and Pacific Ocean Division.

**PL 84-99**

Public Law 84-99, Emergency Response to Natural Disasters, is the Corps of Engineers' basic authority to provide for emergency activities in support of State and Local governments prior to, during, and after a flood event.

**QLR**

A QLR is a time-sensitive document that may precede a full After-Action Report or replace a full After-Action Report for smaller events that do not meet the formal After Action Report triggers and highlight major findings or high-priority issues from an After-Action Review that require attention.

**RSC**

The Readiness Support Center serves as an enterprise center of expertise dedicated to ensuring and improving USACE's capability to respond to civil and military contingencies under the Directorate of Contingency Operations, Office of Homeland Security.