

Emergency Management Concepts

1. Why IYCF-E Must Be in Emergency Plans

- Infants and young children are among the highest-risk populations in disasters, primarily due to WASH (water, sanitation & hygiene) problems.
- Feeding decisions that are normally safe often become dangerous when systems break down.
- Most disaster response systems are not designed with infants in mind — this is a life safety issue.

“Emergency plans don’t fail because people don’t care. They fail because responsibility for infant feeding is unclear — or assigned too late.”

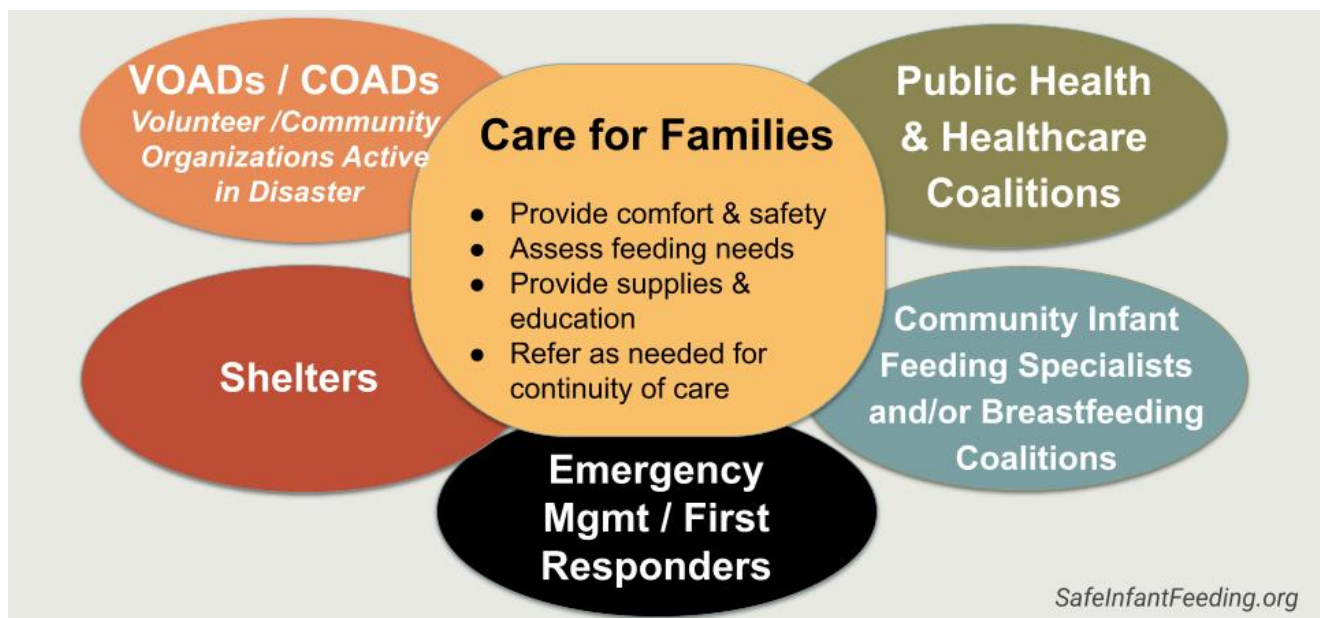
— Ops Guidance on IFE, ENN 2024

Well-intentioned distribution of infant feeding supplies is one of the most common causes of harm to babies during disasters.

2. Where IYCF-E Fits in Emergency Systems

IYCF-E Ownership: Mass Care (ESF 6)

Organizations and experts are coalescing around placing infant feeding under Mass Care. It is applicable to Feeding Operations, and should be considered in Congregate Sheltering.



Everyone Is Responsible for Caring for Families

- Emergency Management
- Public Health
- Shelters / Mass Care
- Healthcare
- VOADs/COADs
- Other Community Organizations

Core care functions for families:

- Provide comfort & safety
- Assess feeding needs
- Provide supplies & education
- Refer as needed for continuity of care

All of these roles exist in every county. The question is not whether they exist — it's whether they're connected and aware of IYCF-E needs before an emergency.

3. Emergency Management Concepts & Terminology

The Emergency Response Cycle

Emergency management is a continuous cycle — not a linear process. The four phases are:

Emergency Management Continuum — Four Phases:

- **Preparedness & Prevention:** Planning, training, and drills to ensure an effective response.
- **Response:** Immediate actions taken during and directly after an event to save lives and protect property.
- **Recovery:** Short- and long-term actions to restore services, repair damage, and rebuild ('build back better').
- **Mitigation:** Actions to reduce or eliminate the likelihood and severity of disasters.



Image source:

<https://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/en/services/emergency-management-nwt>

C-MIST Framework

C-MIST is an emergency management framework for identifying and addressing the functional needs of individuals during disasters. Emergency Managers consider all of these aspects for everyone, especially at-risk individuals and everyone with access and functional needs.

Communication

Independence

Transportation

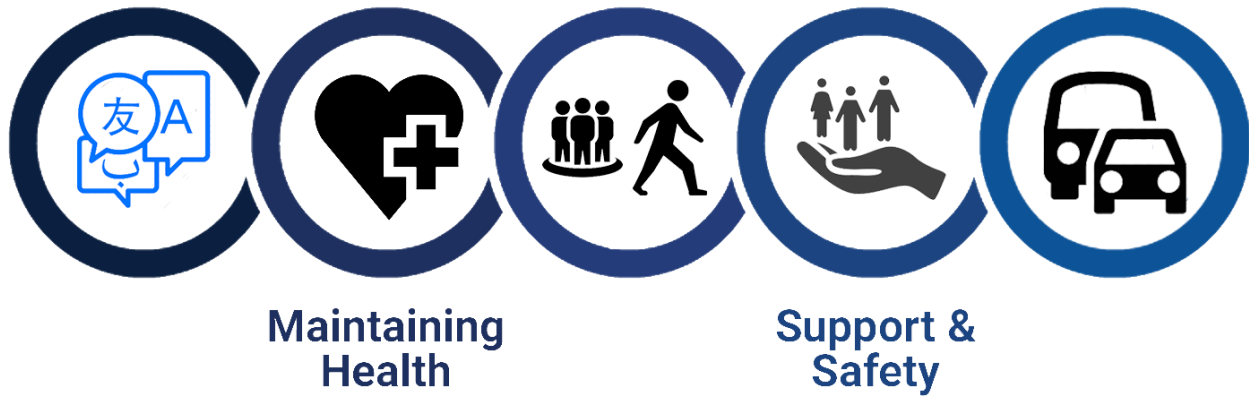


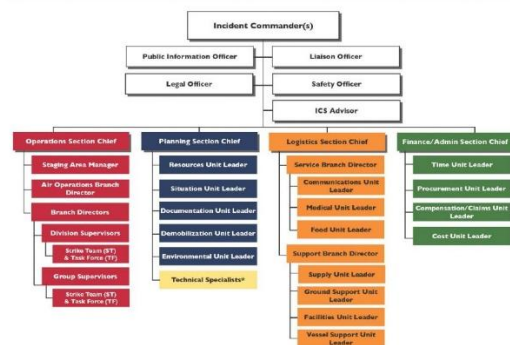
Image Source: <https://prepareky.com/accessible-resources/cmist-framework/>

C-MIST stands for:

- Communication — needs related to receiving and transmitting information
- Maintaining Health— particularly for ongoing medical needs and health conditions
- Independence — maintaining independence and self-determination as much as practical
- Support and Safety — especially those with access and functional needs (AFN)
- Transportation — ensuring that needed transportation is available, even with reduced access

Incident Command System (ICS)

EMSI Incident Command System Organization Chart



www.emsics.com

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ICS is the standardized operational structure used to manage emergency incidents. It clarifies spans of control, reporting lines, and responsibilities — and illustrates why emergency managers are overseeing many competing priorities at once. This image shows an example.

www.emsics.com/resources/organization-chart/

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Emergency Management Priorities (in order)

- 1 Life Safety** - Minimizing fatalities and injuries
- 2 Incident Stabilization** - Prevent the situation from worsening
- 3 Property Conservation** - Mitigate property damage

Infant feeding is a life safety issue — anchor conversations in Priority 1.

POETE: 5 Elements of Preparedness

POETE is the framework emergency managers use to assess and build preparedness. We can use it to identify where IYCF-E gaps exist and frame requests accordingly.

POETE Element	IYCF-E Application
Planning	Infant care and feeding safety addressed in policies & plans.
Organizing (Staff)	Personal Assistance Services (PAS) — primarily trained infant feeding specialists.
Equipping	Bottles, teats, ready-to-feed (RTF) formula, powdered commercial infant formula (CIF), cleaning equipment/supplies, sanitation kits. Also: shelter signs, sinks, baby carriers, human milk bags. DME (durable medical equipment): pumps, scales. CMS (consumable medical supplies): for medical conditions.
Training	Proper management of supplies; appropriate referral pathways.
Exercising / Evaluating	Tabletop exercises and drills incorporating IYCF-E scenarios.

Communication as a 6th Element

- Pre-prepared messages: Develop clear, consistent, and culturally appropriate messages on safe infant feeding practices for various emergency scenarios (including breastfeeding guidance and safe formula preparation).
- Information dissemination channels: Identify and establish reliable communication channels to reach affected populations with critical IYCF information — even when traditional infrastructure is disrupted.

To Learn More...

To learn more about emergency management terminology and how operations run in emergencies, see this [overview of some of the free emergency management trainings](#) available through FEMA.

<https://safeinfantfeeding.org/learning-the-language-of-emergency-management-fema-trainings-worth-knowing-about/>