In today’s globalized world, there are a myriad of opportunities for the rapid spread of diseases and other threats to health security, as illustrated by recent events, such as the 2014 Ebola virus outbreak, the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami, and the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.

To facilitate international cooperation during public health crises, WHO, together with Member States and partner organizations, set up EOC-NET, a global network of emergency operations centres and professionals. WHO’s Strategic Health Operations Centre (SHOC) is at the heart of this network.

SHOC is a flexible operational platform for information sharing and response coordination to public health risks of potential international concern. By leveraging state-of-the-art technologies, SHOC supports Member States in their field activities.

Beyond response operations, SHOC is involved in identifying and tracking resources and appraising public health threats. Also, it participates in global preparedness activities and provides technical advice for the establishment, management and assessment of emergency operations structures.
SHOC works with WHO HQ teams, regional and country offices as well as other public health agencies to gather and map real-time intelligence on disease outbreaks, natural disasters and chemical emergencies. Informal sources, such as news media, are continuously monitored for events that may threaten international public health.

Following the detection of a potential, major public health event, SHOC provides the communications platform to obtain further information from the affected country and other authoritative sources. Once that information is received, SHOC uses emergency management tools to support risk assessments and any required WHO response.

To ensure a more effective response during public health events, WHO works together with EOC-NET partners to assists Member States and international organizations in building EOC capacities with evidence-based guidance, world-class EOC experts and various networking activities. Please see: www.who.int/ihr/eoc_net/en/