



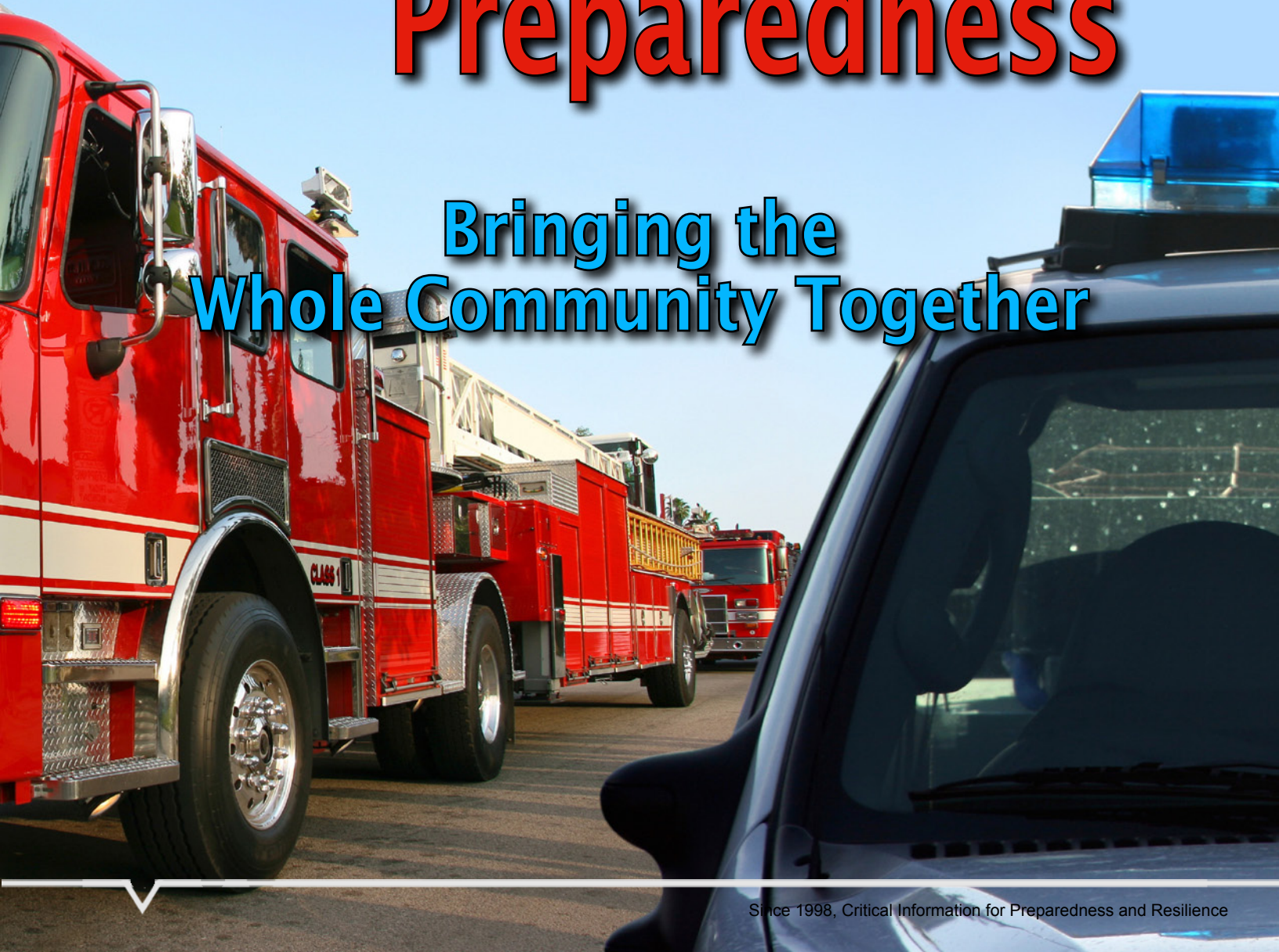
DomPrep Journal

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Volume 12 Issue 2, February 2016

Status of Preparedness

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Business Office

P.O. Box 810
Severna Park, MD 21146 USA
www.DomesticPreparedness.com
(410) 518-6900

Staff

Martin Masiuk
Founder & Publisher
mmasiuk@domprep.com

James D. Hessman
Editor Emeritus

Catherine Feinman
Editor-in-Chief
cfeinman@domprep.com

Carole Parker
Manager, Integrated Media
cparker@domprep.com

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About the Cover: By land, air, and sea, public safety and emergency response personnel must be prepared for all types of emergencies. They also must be prepared to work together for the common goal of protecting the communities they serve. (Source: [@iStockphoto/egdigital](#))



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Editorial Remarks

By Catherine Feinman



Continuing with last month's "[Whole Community](#)" theme, this issue focuses on the efforts of various disciplines to bridge gaps and build greater community resilience. Over the years, DomPrep has had the privilege of working with many distinguished professionals from across the disaster preparedness and resilience spectrum. These practitioners, some of whom serve on the [DomPrep Advisory Committee](#), have provided valuable suggestions and feedback to ensure that the *DomPrep Journal* stays relevant to its readers, with content that helps agencies and organizations improve resilience postures within their communities. This edition of the journal highlights the perspectives of some of these professionals on the "Status of Preparedness" with regard to their respective disciplines.

Leading this month's issue is Kay Goss, with an update on the state of preparedness in the emergency management field. Only when the whole community works together can the nation face and recover from the natural and human-caused incidents that could plague any community. Vincent Davis follows with an issue he has identified and coined as the "Continuity Gap" for the private sector. Managing operations following a disaster incident is not the same as managing regular daily operations.

One of the first units on the scene of an incident is often the fire service, which has a rich history of tradition. Michael Cox shares how some simple changes could better prepare the fire department and its personnel for the changing threat environment. Similarly, Stephen Grainer says it is time to reexamine the Incident Command System, or it may not exist for future generations.

When it comes to the health and well being of a community, public health and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel must ensure their own safety first, in order to be ready and available to respond when needed. Raphael Barishansky and Seth Komansky describe how "situational awareness" applies to the public health personnel who often face hidden dangers. Seth further explains what it would take to push EMS operations to a higher state of readiness.

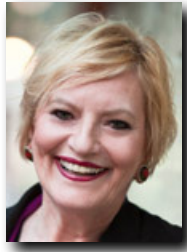
Of course, the youngest members of a community and their caretakers also need to be prepared. Andrew Roszak describes the types of procedures and practices that facilities will need to incorporate to meet the requirements for childcare disaster plans. For any incident, whether planning for an emergency or responding on an operational level, Sharon Russell explains how these roles are much more connected than one would think. Plans need input from operations, and operations need direction from planning.

Rounding out the issue, James Metzger provides a case study of Amtrak's whole community efforts to build national resilience, one community at a time. Amtrak connects communities with rail lines and provides planning, training, and educational assistance to engage employees, passengers, and other community stakeholders to better prepare for possible incidents. By promoting a whole community effort, communities will be wholly prepared.

Emergency Management: The State of Preparedness

By Kay C. Goss

The United States has built a solid foundation for emergency preparedness, which is based on the whole community concept of bringing together all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and the public. By working together and building strong leaders, the nation can withstand the many natural and human-caused incidents that may occur.



Preparedness is the foundation of emergency management. In assessing the current levels of preparedness, this article looks at pre-disaster preparedness in the United States, at the national, state, tribal, and local levels, as well as regional collaboration, and includes funding, planning, training, exercising, standards, certifications, accreditations, and credentialing.

National Planning Frameworks

Recently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – the flagship agency for emergency management – released a full set of Preparedness Frameworks for Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery. The initial guidance is contained in the [National Preparedness Goal](#), which includes a set of [32 key core capabilities](#). These desired capabilities are referenced in multiple FEMA preparedness guidance materials in the [National Planning Frameworks](#) for their National Preparedness System. These are intended for the “whole community” – that is, individuals, families, communities, private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and federal governments and cover these specific comprehensive capabilities:

- Planning
- Public Information/Warning
- Operational Coordination
- Forensics/Attribution
- Intelligence/Information Sharing
- Interdiction/Disruption
- Screening, Search, Detection
- Access Control/Identity Verification
- Cybersecurity
- Physical Protective Measures
- Risk Management/Protection Programs/Activities
- Supply Chain Integrity/Security
- Community Resilience

- Long-Term Vulnerability Reduction
- Risk/Disaster Resilience Assessment
- Threats/Hazards Identification
- Critical Transportation
- Environmental Response/Health/Safety
- Fatality Management Services
- Fire Management/Suppression
- Infrastructure Systems
- Logistics/Supply Chain Management
- Mass Care Services
- Mass Search and Rescue Operations
- On-Scene Security, Protection, Law Enforcement
- Operational Communications
- Public Health, Healthcare, Emergency Medical Services
- Situational Assessment
- Economic Recovery
- Health and Social Services
- Housing
- Natural and Cultural Resources

The historic National Incident Management System, established after 9/11, also provides a systematic, proactive approach to guide organizations in managing all types of incidents and serves as a cornerstone of national preparedness. The FEMA National Incident Management System's [Guideline for the Credentialing of Personnel](#) describes national credentialing standards and written guidance, describing credentialing and typing processes, and identifies tools that federal emergency response officials and emergency managers at all levels of government may use both routinely and to facilitate multijurisdictional coordinated responses. Through this guideline, FEMA encourages interoperability among federal, state, local, territorial, tribal, and private sector officials in order to facilitate emergency responder deployment for response, recovery, and restoration. This guideline also provides information about where emergency response leaders can obtain expertise and technical assistance in using the national standards or in ways they can adapt the standards to department, agency, jurisdiction, or organization needs.

The National Planning Frameworks describe how all levels of government – the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and the public at-large – work together to build and sustain the capabilities to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from disaster. A National Preparedness Report, released annually, shows strengths and opportunities for improvement. FEMA's Preparedness Cycle's diagram in Figure 1 delineates the sequencing of the traditional, continuing, and future preparedness steps.

Training & Higher Education

FEMA's National Training Program (NTP) supports the National Preparedness Guidelines, providing policy, guidance, and tools that address training design, development, delivery, and evaluation, as appropriate. The NTP also supports development, promulgation, and regular updating of consensus standards for training and ensuring that the training is consistent.

FEMA's training centers include the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), the Center for Domestic Preparedness, and the National Fire Academy. Each has many exciting updates to their offerings in classrooms – around the country as well as on campus – and online, as in the case of EMI's hundreds of [Independent Study Courses](#).



The FEMA Higher Education Program is a fast-growing instrument for building the emergency management profession. After more than 20 years, it now collaborates with about 300 degree and certificate programs around the country, which depend on FEMA for a weekly update on related activities in higher education institutions and related research and activities in the practice area, as well as an annual conference on the EMI campus. Hundreds of academicians, practitioners, students, and government officials attend the annual conference.

Initial efforts began to initiate an accreditation process for these degree programs in emergency management by the Foundation for Higher Education Accreditation in Emergency Management and focused primarily on inputs such as the standards for emergency management programs, contained in the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) and the NFPA 1600 Standard for Emergency Management and Business Continuity. Several institutions went through this accrediting process successfully. Eventually, during the 2012-2015 timeframe, FEMA sponsored a series of Focus Group sessions on Higher Education Accreditation, including academicians and practitioners. This timely project resulted in adoption of new standards, focusing more on outcomes than on inputs, at the annual FEMA Higher Education Conference in 2015. The accrediting organization was renamed the Council for Accreditation of Emergency Management Education. These standards are currently being fleshed out in detail and will soon be ready for unveiling and testing.

National Training & Education Division

Partners like the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium, and the Naval Postgraduate School provide additional training

opportunities. The National Training and Education Division provides oversight to the Competitive Training Grants Program, which awards funds to applicants to develop and deliver innovative training programs.

Exercises

The [FEMA Emergency Planning Exercises](#) webpage offers free, downloadable tabletop exercises for reviewing, sharing, and using by the public, especially the private sector. The National Exercise Program ([NEP](#)) is primarily for members of the emergency management professionals. The NEP uses the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program ([HSEEP](#)) methodology and related tools and resources provided by the [National Exercise and Simulation Center](#). HSEEP provides guiding principles for exercise programs, as well as a common methodology for exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. HSEEP exercise and evaluation doctrine is flexible, scalable, and adaptable to the needs of stakeholders and is applicable for exercises across all national preparedness mission areas—prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. These HSEEP templates and guidance may be accessed on the [FEMA Exercise webpage](#).

Nonprofit Collaboration

FEMA decided to bring back the American Red Cross to head the Mass Care Emergency Support Function about five years ago, signing a Memorandum of Agreement and forming the National Mass Care Council. The council is co-chaired by the American Red Cross, FEMA, the National Emergency Management Association, and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and is comprised of council members from Big City Emergency Managers, Department of Health and Human Services, Feeding America, North American Mission Board–The Southern Baptist Convention, and The Salvation Army.

The council serves as the steering body and focuses on:

- Sheltering (including household pets)
- Feeding
- Distribution of emergency supplies
- Family reunification services
- Immediate general health, emotional health, and spiritual health services
- Access to information

The National Board's Emergency Food & Shelter Program

This program provides small grants to more than 11,000 local shelter programs on an annual basis and provides a foundation of continuity to their efforts and their communities. The board is chaired by FEMA and includes The Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, United Way, Jewish Federation, National Council of Churches, and American Red Cross.

Certifications

The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) was originally founded by U.S. local emergency managers primarily and now attracts international participants as well as professionals from every level and the private sector and currently serves the global emergency management community.

For 30 years, IAEM has served as the credentialing organization of emergency managers through their Certified Emergency Manager ([CEM®](#)) administered through their CEM Commission, comprised of professional emergency managers who have obtained the CEM, some multiple times. The certification is for five years and requires a test, an essay, as well as three years of membership in a professional organization, attendance at a professional conference, six public service contributions to the profession, and 100 hours of emergency management training or education plus 100 hours of general management training. Hundreds of emergency managers are certified.

Accreditation

The Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) provides guidance and assessments for states, localities, tribes, territories, and campuses, with plans for expansion internationally and private sector. EMAP has a set of general areas of program evaluation, including the following:

- Emergency Response
- Mitigation
- Prevention
- Recovery
- Protection
- Threats and Hazard Identification
- Operational Coordination
- Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment
- Planning
- Public Information
- Operational Communications

The *National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)*, a standards-setting organization has, over the past 20 years, developed standards through [NFPA 1600](#) for emergency management and business continuity, somewhat similar to those promulgated by EMAP. However, NFPA is not an accreditation body and does not provide evaluation, simply guidance.

The *National Emergency Management Association* is the professional organization started by those who serve as state directors of emergency management, but now includes professionals throughout the emergency management community as well as the following committees:

- Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Committee
- Mitigation Committee
- Private Sector Committee
- Preparedness Committee
- Response & Recovery Committee

- Legislative Committee
- Homeland Security Committee
- Legal Counsel Committee

The state of preparedness in the United States has never been stronger. Emergency managers at all levels of government, the private/nonprofit sectors, and the general public have united under the whole community organizing principle, accepting the challenge of working together to ensure a strong emergency preparedness for the nation.

Kay C. Goss, CEM®, is executive in residence at the University of Arkansas and the chief executive officer for GC Barnes Group, LLC. Previous positions include: president at World Disaster Management, LLC (2011-2013); senior principal and senior advisor of emergency management and continuity programs at SRA International (2007-2011); senior advisor of emergency management, homeland security, and business security at Electronic Data Systems (2001-2007); associate Federal Emergency Management Agency director in charge of national preparedness, training, and exercises, appointed by President William Jefferson Clinton (1993-2001); senior assistant to the governor for intergovernmental relations, Governor William Jefferson Clinton (1982-1993); chief deputy state auditor at the Arkansas State Capitol (1981-1982); project director at the Association of Arkansas Counties (1979-1981); research director at the Arkansas State Constitutional Convention, Arkansas State Capitol (1979); project director of the Educational Finance Study Commission, Arkansas General Assembly, Arkansas State Capitol (1977-1979).



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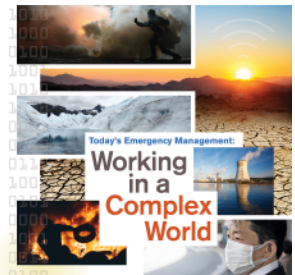
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The Continuity Gap

By Vincent B. Davis

Corporate confusion could spell disastrous response in a crisis. To dispel such confusion, companies should have an emergency manager on staff, ensure that employees are well prepared, and recognize that managing daily business operations is not the same as managing response and recovery operation after a disaster.



Business continuity and emergency management, with various nuances, are not the same. In the years since Y2K – through the technology boom, the Internet, and the evolution of sophisticated cyber systems – corporations have spent billions of dollars in their efforts to ensure business resilience in the face of new threats, risks, and vulnerabilities. Often lost within the processes, procedures, and plans for redundancy of data systems and information is a subtle but powerful reality: if the event cannot be managed effectively, no long-term efforts to protect the business will succeed.

Many corporations have invested little time, effort, and resources toward preparing to “manage” the inevitable outcome of a catastrophe at its onset. That discipline is the core of emergency management, not business continuity. This type of failure can be equated to having a new, state-of-the-art computerized automobile with all the bells and whistles, but forgetting to include a tire jack, with instructions on how to use it. When the “wheels fall off” of costly planning efforts, though, the result is a disaster of disconnected response.

Fundamental Gaps & Models for Success

The following three fundamental realities create a phenomenon that can be best described as the “Continuity Gap”:

- Most businesses do not employ a full-time emergency manager because they believe managing disasters can be handled by existing security or management staff.
- The heavy emphasis of business managers on data and information technology (IT) recovery has left a gap that does not account for prevention, protection, employee preparedness, and capabilities essential to response and recovery of the whole business.
- The assumption that managing emergencies is a “natural” consequence of managing the business has itself led to a deficiency of proper planning, training, and exercises to manage life safety and responses first for many businesses.

Contributing to the Continuity Gap is something that conspicuously seems to be absent in the business continuity planning cycle of many companies: the focus on employee and family preparedness. Adding to the mix is “corporate fear” among business managers, many of whom may feel intimidated and threatened by their lack of understanding of emergency management best practices such as the Incident Command Structure (ICS) and emergency operation center operations. Combined, the Continuity Gap, family preparedness levels, and corporate fear create the perfect storm for a failed response to major disasters, or even to

minor emergencies.

Multiple models and hybrid subsets of emergency management and business continuity planning, most of which evolved independently, exist within wide-ranging corporate structures. The result has been a mixed bag of programs that vary in emphasis and approach. Table 1 provides a matrix of program types. A fully mature program has no gaps that are unchecked either as part of individual or overall planning. This matrix is a first step in assessing where an organization is with regard to business continuity planning and emergency management. Integrated programs work; however, they must be firmly anchored in true collaboration and understanding of what is needed, what is important, and what is effective. When it fails, the results can be catastrophic.

Table 1. Program Types

	Business continuity program	Emergency management program	Corporate security	Facilities management
Funded/budgeted	X		X	X
Has response plans		X	X	
Led by information technology	X			X
Integrated with risk	X			
Employee preparedness component		X		
Public-private partnerships component		X	X	
EOC management program		X		
Training & exercise program		X		

Lessons Learned – Failure to Plan

An example of such failure is ABC Manufacturing (company name changed for privacy). ABC spent hundreds of thousands of dollars establishing very detailed IT recovery plans and strategies, but excluded (intentionally) all other departments and disciplines from the planning process. The “we’re in charge and we know what’s best” attitude of the company’s lead planners was fully in play. However, a structural fire at a main data facility exposed the fact that, despite their planning, the company had not created a simple evacuation plan or conducted a drill for the employees at the facility.

Although this may sound improbable, it actually happened, and thankfully nobody was killed or injured. The incident did, however, underscore the very weaknesses in many corporate plans, and led to changes in the company’s planning policies. The following four lessons learned may help corporate leaders address the Continuity Gap:

- *Lesson 1:* Do not allow business continuity, IT, risk, compliance, security, or other key business functions to plan in a vacuum. Although these organizations are typically specialists, they often lack a broader understanding of emergency planning. This means not merely expecting key stakeholders to “play nice” and collaborate on their own, because chances are it will not happen. To ensure accountability, consider Lessons 2-4.
- *Lesson 2:* Establish a planning team representative of the key players. If possible, retain an outside consultant to help establish regular planning meetings, goals, objectives, and outcomes. This will help prevent “turf wars” and ensure all voices are equally heard in the planning process.
- *Lesson 3:* If not already on staff, hire an experienced emergency manager. Although the business continuity and other teams may be staffed with quality people, they are not necessarily experienced in the nuances of emergency planning and operations.
- *Lesson 4:* Establish an inclusive and comprehensive guidance document that clearly sets forth the company’s philosophy, culture, and methodology for handling emergencies. Do not leave planning to chance, and do not assume all key managers and departments are entering the discussion from the same vantage point. Collaborate at all costs, do not assume any function has all the answers.

Finally, a common company goal is to be resilient to support its stockholders, investors, and customers, and to continue to lead the long-term financial viability of the communities it serves. Often forgotten in that effort are the people who make it happen. Every business continuity or emergency management program plan should begin and end with the understanding that, regardless of the business, it cannot run by itself without employees.

Part of every resilience plan, program, and activity should involve asking the question, “What have we done today to ensure our employees are equipped and capable of supporting the recovery?” Disaster planning should be anchored in employee and family preparedness. To accomplish this, human resources must be actively engaged on the planning team. If an employee’s family is affected by the emergency, he or she will not be free to come to work or to play a critical part in company recovery.

Vincent B. Davis, CEM, is senior preparedness manager for Sony Network Entertainment, where he is responsible for developing disaster plans and programs for the company’s North America locations. Before joining Sony, he was program manager of emergency preparedness and response for Walgreens Co., where he designed emergency plans and coordinated emergency operations center operations for the company’s 8,300 stores and facilities during major disasters. Following his career in the U.S. Air Force and Illinois National Guard, with 23 years in military public affairs, he served as: external affairs and community relations manager at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); regional preparedness manager for the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago; and private sector consultant to the Illinois-Indiana-Wisconsin Regional Catastrophic Planning Team. He holds certifications as an Illinois Professional Emergency Manager and FEMA Professional Continuity Practitioner, and is a member of the International Association of Emergency Managers Children’s Caucus and a lifetime member of the Black Emergency Managers Association. He authored, “Lost And Turned Out, A Guide To Preparing Underserved Communities For Disasters,” and founded PreparednessMatters.org Consulting. He also is vice president of strategic alliances and community relations for PrepWorld LLC, creators of PrepBiz Video Gamification for Disaster Preparedness Education APP for children.

Fire Department Preparedness Made Simple

By Michael E. Cox Jr.

In the fire service, it is time for leaders to think strategically, challenge long-held assumptions, and move beyond the “norm,” to ensure that their communities are fully prepared for any emergency or incident they may encounter. This can be achieved through careful planning, effective communication, and extensive training.



Effective preparation is an important element in all organizations. Without preparation, the achievement of an organization’s overall mission would not occur. This is especially true in the fire service where members are charged with delivering an effective and efficient response to a multitude of different situations. Although such an array of different response situations might seem quite complex and overwhelming to some, fire service leaders can ensure an optimal level of preparedness within their organizations by following four simple steps.

Leadership – Thinking Strategically

The first step in the process is effective leadership. The fire service in general is very different from many other organizations. Members of the fire service are typically called upon to respond to many different types of emergencies. In order to prepare for these numerous events, today’s fire service leaders must think and function strategically. In other words, they cannot physically get marred down in the day-to-day operations of their organizations.

Strategic leaders must be able to look past the status quo or normal operations and function as a visionary. They must be able to anticipate or predict numerous threats and put in place a framework to effectively respond to, mitigate, and recover from such incidents. No longer is it acceptable for fire service leaders to put their heads in the sand and say “that will never happen here,” or to live by the motto: “But we’ve always done it this way.” Strategic leaders work to challenge long-held assumptions, question the norm, and ensure an appropriate level of preparedness is achieved for whatever emergency they may face.

An example of this type of strategic leadership would be the changes that were put in place in many fire service organizations over the past few years to effectively handle the way active assailant incidents are mitigated. Knowing that victims of severe trauma incidents are fighting the clock, many fire departments in conjunction with law enforcement partners have developed special weapons attack team (SWAT) medic programs or put in place operating procedures to get fire department medical providers inside as soon as possible to begin triaging and effectively treat the severely injured. This clearly is visionary thinking and a strategic change that will save lives; however, it is contrary the old thought process of waiting for an entire building to be secured before entering to conduct fire department operations.

Planning – Assess & Coordinate

The second step in the preparedness process for the fire service is planning. Like many other activities in life, planning is a key component in significant initiatives and it is something that



should begin long before an event occurs. This process should start with the completion of a hazard, threat, and vulnerability assessment(s) for the targeted geographical area. These activities help identify both natural and manmade hazards that threaten the area. In addition to these assessments, the planning process should also take into consideration the operational needs for such threats. This helps to assess an organization's capabilities and address the need for the establishment or updating of current automatic and/or mutual aid agreements.

Similarly, other operational concerns such as schedule/shift changes, callbacks, staffing, specialized equipment, and other logistical needs can be addressed. Establishing relationships with other agencies and organizations like state and local emergency operations centers and emergency management officials are imperative. These multiagency coordination centers are key to requesting and receiving the various resources needed during large-scale manmade or natural disasters.

Examples of this type of planning are clearly seen in many fire department organizations today as they prepare for severe weather events such as hurricanes or severe winter storms. As a direct result of the planning and assessment process used to prepare for weather incidents, proactive actions can be implemented such as: staging specialized equipment; activating local/regional response teams; closing particular roads or buildings; and implementing pre-incident evacuations of low-lying areas or problematic structures such as mobile and manufactured homes. Simply put it is the transition of information into action to provide effective response and mitigation activities to protect property and prevent the loss of life.

Communication – Inform at All Levels

The third step in the fire service preparedness process is communication. Communications are key in any organization, especially emergency response agencies like the fire service. Information gained during the planning and assessment process has to be communicated within the department so members at all levels can gain an awareness and new understanding of such perceived threats, as well as potential steps needed to successfully mitigate such events.

In addition to communication at the department level, strategic leaders also need to communicate this information to elected and appointed officials within the jurisdiction. Communication at this level helps to keep them up-to-date regarding the types of incidents that threaten the area and the needs of the department to respond to such events. One final

level where communication should occur is with the residents of the jurisdiction. Residents should be made aware of the potential threats in the area and the steps they can take to help prepare in the event of such an emergency.

An example of this communication process could be a large-scale drill such as a large hazmat/mass casualty incident in a local mall, casino, sports stadium, or subway. These exercises provide strategic fire service leaders the opportunity to demonstrate and allow elected/appointed officials to witness a fire department's response capabilities firsthand – especially the resource requirements for large incidents that involve a multiagency/multijurisdictional response. This type of drill or event(s) also provides an opportunity for the fire department to share educational and/or preparedness information through the local media, which may cover the drill for the residents in the area.

Training – Ensure Response to All Hazards

The final step in the fire service preparedness process is training. Training is the direct result of the compilation of information that was gathered and communicated throughout the previous steps of this process. An effective response force must be trained to respond and mitigate the wide array of emergencies. However, the training and tactics needed to mitigate a building fire is different than that required to mitigate the aftermath from a category-4 hurricane or an active assailant incident. Today's fire service leaders must ensure that their response force is trained and ready to respond to whatever emergency occurs. The proper training ensures the safe and effective response to those in need.

A successful example of training for any type of response is the refresher/recertification programs delivered in many fire departments today. It was this type of training that prepared one east coast department that responded to a call for a couple of sick children at a summer camp swimming pool to quickly identify a hazardous materials incident. The quick thinking and reliance on adequate training allowed the first arriving units to identify the problem, request adequate resources, triage the injured, and transport more than 30 pediatric patients to local and regional hospitals.

Emergency preparedness is an important component in today's fire service organization. Although complex, the process can be made manageable by employing four simple steps: effective leadership, planning, communication, and training. These steps can assist a department in providing a response framework to mitigate the types of incidents responders will face within their jurisdictions.

Michael E. Cox Jr. is a 30-year veteran of the fire service and currently serves as a faculty member at the University of Maryland's Fire and Rescue Institute, where he works as a member of the Institute's Management Team. He began his fire service career as a volunteer at age 16 as a member of the Woodland Beach Volunteer Fire Department in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. He joined the Anne Arundel County Fire Department as a career employee in 1988 and advanced through the ranks to become the 10th fire chief of Anne Arundel County, where he led a combination career/volunteer force of 1,400 personnel until his retirement in December 2014. He holds an associate's degree in emergency medical services from Anne Arundel Community College, a bachelor's degree in fire science from the University of Maryland, and a master's degree in executive fire service leadership from Grand Canyon University. A nationally registered emergency medical technician paramedic; he also is a state-certified emergency services instructor and a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. The national Center for Public Safety Excellence also has designated him as a Chief Fire Officer. He can be reached at: mcox@mfri.org

Public Health Preparedness Realities

By Raphael M. Barishansky & Seth J. Komansky

The term “situational awareness” typically conjures images of emergency responders on the scene of a complex incident with many emergency vehicles and various levels of activity, both command and operationally oriented. Public health normally does not enter into the equation, but perhaps it is time to change that thinking.



Pre-9/11, public health authorities had not been considered to any great degree when planning for, or even responding to, emergencies of all sizes. The truth is, though, that public health agencies have been planning for, preparing for, and responding to various emergencies for many years, including environmental emergencies, foodborne and sanitation issues, and water supply safety. In a [2010 report](#) detailing local health department capabilities, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) documented that health departments responded to the following emergencies in 2010: infectious diseases (26 percent); natural disasters (23 percent); foodborne outbreaks (21 percent); chemical spills or releases (9 percent); and exposures to potential biological agents (5 percent).

However, the responsibilities of public health agencies in an emergency are not limited to these situations. They are also called upon to respond in weather emergencies such as hurricanes and snowstorms, since these emergencies may implicate or give rise to a wide variety of public health concerns. The duties and responsibilities involved in these incidents may include health system readiness, mass care responsibilities, and sheltering assistance.

Public Health Situational Awareness

Although these situations may not call for public health personnel to respond to the scene of an incident, they certainly do entail these personnel understanding situational awareness about the event. Personnel must know how this awareness applies to their departments, how it could allow them to respond to an actual or perceived public health emergency, and how it would help them to change course as the situation evolves. Situational awareness is defined within the [National Response Framework](#) as “the ability to identify, process, and comprehend the critical elements of information about an incident.”

Concerning public health efforts, situational awareness is usually determined by examining traditional sources. Health departments at the state or local level often use sources such as public health reportable disease surveillance, health surveys, hospital reporting mechanisms, and even outbreak monitoring. Nontraditional sources such as social media – for example, Twitter – can augment these traditional sources of disease-specific information and provide critical public health information in advance of an emergency.

One of the more relevant examples of this information being used to better inform public health situational awareness can be found in the initiative known as Google Flu Trends. This data tool, which tracked and compiled influenza data based on searches, was one of the first to demonstrate the value of data in modeling disease spread, real-time identification of emergencies, and identification of macroeconomic changes ahead of more traditional methods. Although Google Flu Trends was discontinued, this setback is not an indication against the use of nontraditional situational awareness methods to inform public health personnel but rather as a reminder that both traditional and nontraditional sources must be considered when developing and modifying public health determinations during an emergency.

Real-World, Real-Time Application

In some cases, public health agencies need to have situational awareness in a real-time, literal sense. With certain agencies employing divisions responsible for the well being of children, endangered adults, and the elderly, home visits may result in paths crossing with hostile actors while carrying out duties. The training for personnel in the field to recognize an escalating scenario before it becomes a hostile incident could ensure the safety of all parties involved. It is important to have a baseline understanding of behavioral indicators for potentially violent subjects, especially for high-risk situations, such as during a scenario where it becomes necessary to remove children from a residence due to a dangerous environment. Further, recognizing nontraditional indicators such as those for gang activity, terrorism, and human trafficking could potentially assist the public health practitioner with situational awareness of the environment they are working in, or worse, need to get out from.

“Personnel must know how this awareness applies to their departments, how it could allow them to respond to an actual or perceived public health emergency, and how it would help them to change course as the situation evolves.”

At other times, the situational awareness produced and shared by the public health community can enhance the safety and preparedness for other disciplines, such as emergency medical services, law enforcement, or even homeland security. The recognition of a covert incident – such as a planned biological release, with multiple victims arriving at multiple healthcare facilities – can assist responders in better preparing for additional patients and best practices to manage these patients as well as allow for law enforcement to potentially track those responsible for the intentional release.

In a real-world example with lessons learned, public health professionals took a leading role during the Ebola threat in 2014 to determine best practices and to bring stakeholders to the table for collaboration on how to approach the concerns faced by multiple disciplines.



Public health agencies have become a depository for mandatory reporting information, which could include communicable diseases that would elevate the threat for communities.

The use of syndromic surveillance systems to enhance sharing this information, specifically through event detection and trend analysis, is an example of this multidisciplinary use. A good example comes from the State of North Carolina, with its North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool ([NC DETECT](#)). Implemented in 2004, a compilation of data from emergency departments, Carolinas Poison Center, and the Pre-hospital Medical Information System (PreMIS) allows for strong collaboration and is inclusive for several critical sources. Gathering information to determine drug utilization trends, such as the heroin epidemic that many U.S. communities are currently facing, is just one example of how the information from a system like this can develop and enhance situational awareness – both within the public health discipline and across the larger healthcare community – and even inform external stakeholders, such as law enforcement agencies. Public health situational awareness provides a stronger understanding of the problem and paints a bigger picture for all stakeholders.

Expanding the Public Health Role

Public health agencies' roles in preparing for and responding to emergencies expanded exponentially after 9/11. The need for robust systems to enhance these agencies' situational awareness is paramount and can often spell the difference between understanding an emerging public health threat, with significant implications for failing to act appropriately. These systems also have the potential to ensure that public health agencies share appropriate emergency information with their response partners, thus promoting a coordinated approach to myriad incidents.

Raphael M. Barishansky, MPH, MS, CPM, is a solutions-driven consultant working with emergency medical services (EMS) agencies as well as emergency management and public health organizations on complex issues, including: leadership development, strategic planning, policy implementation, and regulatory compliance. He previously served as the director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) at the Connecticut Department of Public Health (2012-2015) as well as the chief of public health emergency preparedness at the Prince Georges County, Maryland Health Department (2008-2012). A frequent contributor to the DomPrep Journal and other publications, he can be reached at rbarishansky@gmail.com

Seth J. Komansky, MS, NRP, is a district chief with the Wake County Department of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Raleigh, North Carolina. He is assigned to the operations division as a field supervisor in Raleigh's downtown district and manages Wake County's Medical Intelligence Unit. Additionally, he serves as the statewide EMS field liaison officer coordinator at the N.C. Information Sharing and Analysis Center, North Carolina's state fusion center based at the N.C. State Bureau of Investigation. He has a Master of Science in homeland security management from the Homeland Security and Terrorism Institute at Long Island University.

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State of Preparedness 2016: Children & Child Care

By Andrew R. Roszak

By 30 September 2016, all states will be required to create child care disaster plans under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, which include procedures for facilities to: evacuate; relocate; shelter-in-place; lock-down; communicate; reunify families; continue operations; and accommodate infants, toddlers, and children with additional physical, mental, or medical needs.



Children make up nearly [25 percent of the population](#) in the United States. Yet, in the aftermath of almost every major disaster, the need to further improve policies and procedures for children during and after a disaster is noted. One of the most prominent examples was during the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, which caused more than [5,000 children](#) to become separated from their families. Further, the [comprehensive report](#) issued in 2010 by the National Commission on Children and Disasters detailed numerous issues and recommendations, the vast majority of which are still outstanding.

Adding to the need to increase preparedness for children is the way in which employment has changed in the United States. According to the Child Care Aware® of America's 2015 report "[Parents and the High Cost of Child Care](#)," substantial changes have occurred in the availability of child care. Half of all mothers, and only a third of mothers with children less than three years old, worked outside the home 40 years ago. Today, nearly 75 percent of mothers are in the labor force, including 61 percent of mothers with children less than three years old. As a result of this trend, more children are receiving out-of-home care than ever before. Throughout the nation, nearly 11 million children under the age of five receive child care. Most children spend an average of 36 hours each week in child care.

Current & Future Legislation

Given these figures, emergency preparedness efforts at the child care level are becoming increasingly important. Congress recently sought to increase child care emergency preparedness efforts through the Child Care and Development Block Grant ([CCDBG](#)) Act of 2014, signed into law by President Barack Obama on 19 November 2014. This law reauthorized the CCDBG Program, the primary federal funding for child care assistance for families. The reauthorization included several new requirements, with a new focus on disaster preparedness. Under the 2014 CCDBG law, states must create a child care disaster plan that includes:

- "Evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down procedures, and procedures for communication and reunification with families, continuity of operations, and accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions."

- “Guidelines for the continuation of child care services in the period following the emergency or disaster, which may include the provision of emergency and temporary child care services, and temporary operating standards for child care providers during that period; and procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training and practice drills.”

States are required to create these plans by 30 September 2016.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 was not the only time Congress had emergency preparedness for children on its radar. Also of note, on 10 December 2015, [H.R.2795](#) – First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations passed the House of Representatives. [If passed in the Senate](#), the bill would require the Department of Homeland Security to develop a report on the preparedness and protection of first responders. The H.R.2795 report would examine a variety of policies and procedures, including “the presence of a first responder’s family in an area impacted by a terrorist attack.” Given this language, the report would seemingly examine access to child care for first responders.

The Link Between Child Care & the Economy

Ensuring the continued availability of child care within a community is a tremendous driver of a community’s economic health and viability, as access to child care is a prerequisite for many before they can return to work. Communities that ensure the availability of continued child care services during and in the aftermath of a disaster can expedite reopening businesses and reestablishing essential services. This also allows first responders to return to work more quickly, without delaying to find a new source for child care. This further provides a benefit to children, as they can return to a normal schedule and become reunited with their peers, thus restoring stability and familiarity.

A [December 2015 report](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Inspector General (OIG), “The Response to Superstorm Sandy Highlights the Importance of Recovery Planning for Child Care Nationwide,” provides further insight on these issues, and highlights the challenges faced by child care providers in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. As in past disasters, many child care facilities struggled with continuity of operations, and had difficulty navigating the disaster assistance process after the storm, causing additional delays in business restoration.

In sum, there is still much to do to increase preparedness for children in the United States, which include but are not limited to: ensuring timely, accurate information is sent to parents; developing and testing evacuation and shelter-in-place plans; and recognizing and caring for the unique mental health needs of children post-disaster.

Thanks to the generous support of an anonymous funder, Child Care Aware® of America launched a new emergency preparedness program in 2015. The program will focus on training Child Care Resource and Referral staff and child care providers, providing technical assistance, developing resources, engaging with key stakeholders, and advancing the national dialogue on the important role of child care before, during, and after emergencies.

Through the recent actions by Congress, the efforts of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Children and Families, the Federal Emergency Management Agencies' focus on children and disaster, and the establishment of an emergency preparedness program at Child Care Aware® of America will lead to broader discussion and collaboration on children's unique needs within the preparedness community.

Andrew Roszak, JD, MPA, EMT-P, serves as the senior director for emergency preparedness at Child Care Aware® of America. He is a recognized expert in emergency preparedness, public health, and environmental health. His professional service includes work: as the senior preparedness director of environmental health, pandemic preparedness, and catastrophic response at the National Association of County and City Health Officials; at the MESH Coalition and the Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County, Indiana, as the senior preparedness advisor supporting Super Bowl 46 and the Indianapolis 500; as a senior advisor for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; on the Budget and HELP Committees of the United States Senate; and at the Illinois Department of Public Health. Before becoming an attorney, he spent eight years as a firefighter, paramedic, and hazardous materials technician in the Chicago-land area. He has an AS in Paramedic Supervision, a BS in Fire Science Management, a Master of Public Administration, and a Juris Doctorate degree. He is admitted to the Illinois and District of Columbia Bars and is admitted to the Bar of the U.S. Supreme Court. Twitter: @AndyRoszak

10 Perspectives on Whole Community

DomPrep's Editor-in-Chief Catherine Feinman interviewed the following subject matter experts from various disciplines to find out their suggestions for improving the "Whole Community" effort in jurisdictions across the country. Listen to the [podcast](#).

Ron Wakeham, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University/Worldwide

Herbert "Bud" Marshall, Nevada Dept. of Public Safety

Robi Mobley, Leidos

Yuri Graves, City of Henderson, Nevada

Christine G. Springer, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Joe Leonard, U.S. Coast Guard (ret.)

Donald Gerkin Jr., Baltimore Police Department

James "Jim" Metzger, Amtrak

Sean Scott, "Red Guide to Recovery"

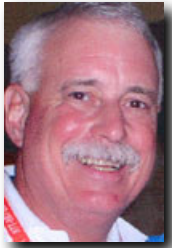
Richard Serino, National Preparedness Leadership Initiative



Incident Command System: Perishable If Not Practiced

By Stephen Grainer

Although the basic Incident Command System (ICS) is taught across emergency response disciplines, several shortcomings and constraints could lead to its downfall. Training for ICS is not a one-time occurrence, but should be an ongoing process of expanding knowledge, exercising skills, and passing on these abilities for the benefit of future generations.



Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the National Incident Management System ([NIMS](#)) was promulgated by the issuance of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 ([HSPD-5](#)) on 28 February 2003. The purpose of HSPD-5 was, “To enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents by establishing a single comprehensive national incident management system.” With the adoption of the Incident Command System ([ICS](#)) as a cornerstone, HSPD-5 states that, “To provide for interoperability and compatibility among federal, state, and local capabilities, the NIMS will include a core set of concepts, principles, terminology, and technologies covering the incident command system.”

Initially published in March 2004, [Appendix B](#) of the NIMS doctrine specifically delineates the ICS for use with “a broad spectrum of incidents, from routine to complex, both naturally occurring and manmade, by all levels of government – federal, state, tribal, and local – as well as nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.” This appendix adds the following “transitional steps” that are needed when applying ICS to an incident environment:

- Recognize and anticipate that organizational elements may need to be activated and take the necessary steps to delegate authority, as appropriate
- Establish and position incident facilities to support field operations as needed
- Establish common terminology for organizational elements, position titles, facilities, and resources
- Develop a written incident action plan

Shortcomings & Constraints

Despite significant strides in training in the fundamental nuances of the ICS since 2004 – and thousands of people completing this training – there appear to be shortcomings or constraints in these efforts, which include: limited training for sufficient numbers of personnel; atrophy of knowledge, skills, and abilities; lack of succession planning; and ongoing distrust for ICS.

One of the first challenges is the inability of some personnel to recognize and/or anticipate the need to activate organizational elements when assessing an incident’s potential. The core

ICS training curriculum provides students with an array of terminology related to functions, positions, facilities, and actions. However, little attention has been given to developing the students' ability to recognize an evolving situation in which more formalized implementation of the ICS should be undertaken.

Simply put, the average student of ICS learns about what ICS is, but not so much about when to use it. Although it could be argued that ICS should be employed all the time, in reality, only the core functions can be employed routinely. There are fewer instances to staff most of the other positions within the ICS organization. Exactly when to transition from routine operations to more urgent conditions – and designate personnel to serve in positions such as incident commander, operations chief, and planning chief – remains unclear.

Second, the number of personnel trained in intermediate (ICS-300) and advanced (ICS-400) ICS are inadequate to ensure that trained and experienced staff will be available to assume the leadership roles needed for many instances. Dating back to around 2005, most agencies at all levels of government – as well as nongovernmental organizations and private sector response support organizations – undertook extensive efforts to

provide introductory and basic ICS (ICS-100 and ICS-200) and intermediate and advanced ICS for supervisors and managers, which is often subject to agency leadership's definitions of these roles.

“Large and small departments have demonstrated or experienced shortcomings and constraints in applying or using the fundamental principles of ICS.”

However, over the past several years, less attention has been focused on maintaining or upgrading

training or on providing opportunities for new personnel to develop experience as they replace those who have moved up or moved out. There appears to be inadequate succession planning to maintain minimum skill sets for ICS among personnel who are moving into positions requiring intermediate or advanced ICS training.

Additionally, training for personnel who will serve in specific command and general staff functions has been secondary. With the exception of local, regional, or departmental organizations that elect to establish an incident management team, a majority of personnel who complete ICS training stop training once they complete ICS-300 or ICS-400. This shows that there is less focus on performance competencies in functional responsibilities than on federal stipulations to adopt NIMS.

Limited Training to Manage Civil Unrest

One report highlights these issues: [“Recommendations for Enhancing Baltimore City’s Preparedness and Response to Mass Demonstration Events](#) (Based on a Review and Analysis of the Events of April 2015),” which was prepared by faculty and staff at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. In this report, a number of deficiencies regarding the city’s training, application, and use of ICS were identified, including Recommendation 2.4, which states:

“BPD [Baltimore Police Department] personnel deployments during mass demonstration and critical incident response should utilize fundamental ICS principles governing chain of command, including span of control and unity of command. BPD should continue to enhance its ICS capabilities through more training and through more frequent utilization of ICS principles in routine incident management. BPD should also continue to develop the ICS capabilities of its senior leadership personnel.”

In the rationale for this recommendation, the report noted:

“While incident management in general is not a forte of police departments, ICS principles and training would facilitate BPD’s management of multiple-officer response incidents on a daily basis. Not only would it be an effective, systematic approach for those incidents, this daily practice will familiarize personnel with ICS concepts and procedures and strengthen response capacity and efficacy during larger incidents.”

Another report, “[Lessons Learned From the 2015 Civil Unrest in Baltimore](#),” issued in September 2015 by the Police Executive Research Forum, stated that:

“Many of the key individuals who had practiced specific ICS positions were assigned to the Freddie Gray Investigation Task Force, leaving vacancies in key spots in the structure. As a result, individuals who had never practiced a particular role as a prime or as a backup were learning it throughout the unrest.”

Based on these observations, one might surmise that the large-city (population 641,000) Baltimore Police Department did not train a sufficient number of supervisory personnel in the concepts or principles of ICS to ensure adequate personnel reserves with the training or experience to assume command and/or general staff functions during the incident(s).

Law Enforcement Lessons in Virginia

Bristol, Virginia, is a small city (population 17,750) having a police department with a full-service force of 56 sworn officers and 21 full-time support personnel (compared to Baltimore’s nearly [4,000 uniformed/sworn and civilian staff](#)). Darryl Milligan is a captain with the department. During a December 2015 discussion with Milligan, he offered several observations. First, he noted that resistance to ICS training might be “a more prevalent problem in large agencies than small agencies.”

In an era of specialization, departments with large staff rosters may have the ability to designate or assign personnel for specific tasks or functions, including implementation of ICS. Given this philosophy, they may train a full cadre, including reserves. Alternatively, they may determine that, since an ICS-type incident is relatively rare, training will be limited to a small cadre to allow more personnel to be trained in other departmental tasks or functions that are deemed higher priorities. An agency the size of the Bristol Police Department does not have the “luxury” of assigning personnel to special assignments. Consequently, personnel must be cross-trained and qualified in multiple disciplines, tasks, or functions.



Milligan also added, “Police officers in general are brought up through their career being taught to get to the problem and handle it.” Most law enforcement officers are conditioned to take immediate action based on visible, audible, and other clues at that moment. This conditioning certainly merits respect because the typical police officer responds alone and cannot rely on others for immediate assistance in urgent situations. The ICS is often perceived as a slow and deliberate process. Thus, to

some extent, law enforcement agencies may be less favorably disposed toward adoption and use of ICS, whether for routine or emergency situations based on the assumption that it will take longer to implement an incident command organization and process than to address the situation.

However, law enforcement agencies are, by no means, the only agencies that have encountered problems with the implementation and use of the ICS. Large and small departments have demonstrated or experienced shortcomings and constraints in applying or using the fundamental principles of the ICS.

Atrophy of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities to Manage Explosion

On 17 April 2013, the West Fertilizer Company Fire and Explosion resulted in 15 fatalities, including 12 emergency responders, and more than 260 documented injured persons. The town of West is a relatively rural and remote community in Texas with an all-volunteer fire department. However, that department reportedly conformed to Texas fire service training standards including training in NIMS and ICS. In its final [Investigation Report](#) on the incident released in January 2016, the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board cited among its conclusions that, “Despite being trained for the ICS and NIMS process, none of the certified firefighters had prior practical experience in establishing incident command.” The report further stated that, “emergency response personnel who responded to the [West Fertilizer Company] incident did not take time to set up, implement, and coordinate an effective incident management system plan.”

That situation revealed another challenge to successful implementation of ICS that is often encountered, a “Good News–Bad News” situation. The good news is that, nationwide, the occurrence of major or catastrophic incidents is relatively rare. The bad news is the same.

Hence, the opportunities to apply principles and practice skills associated with managing such incidents are rare. Therefore, even after receiving good training, many individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities atrophy from lack of application. In many cases, opportunities for review or practice (exercises) must be "manufactured" in order to maintain or improve an individual's abilities in using the ICS.

Training in the concepts, principles, and protocols of ICS is only a small part of the process. What follows is often more important. After the training, trainees should be practicing – or exercising – to reinforce the training. Too often, once the training is completed, no further follow-on is provided. As has been said many times over the years, "If you don't use it, you lose it." This applies to ICS. Training should include ways for "reading the tea leaves" to identify indicators that a situation may escalate or expand to a significant extent. This training should be reinforced periodically. A minimum requirement for annual refresher training in ICS is just a start. At a minimum, an annual exercise should be conducted in which participants are given the challenge of identifying: (a) when an expanded ICS framework is needed; and (b) the appropriate steps and protocols to follow to establish that framework, given a realistic scenario.

Lack of Succession Planning & Ongoing Distrust for ICS

Finally, a potentially critical challenge to successful implementation and use of ICS in the future is simply attrition. NIMS is now 12 years "young." Employees who were just starting their careers in 2004 are at or beyond the halfway mark in their careers. An employee who had five years of experience on the job in 2004 will likely be eligible to retire in three years. The math is relatively simple. The number of personnel who trained in ICS when it was first implemented will be moving up, moving on, or moving out in a short number of years (if they have not already done so). Plans must be in the works now for succession planning to ensure that an ample number of personnel are trained in ICS and given sufficient opportunities to reinforce, refresh, and strengthen their competencies – not only in establishing ICS for their needs, but in recognizing when it is needed.

In summary, although ICS is a valuable tool for managing significant incidents, attention must be focused on developing and extending training for enough personnel to ensure that adequate numbers of qualified and experienced personnel for potential needs are locally available. This includes addressing how to provide mechanisms for maintaining competencies, to ensure that succession planning is in place, and to remove any inherent misunderstandings and distrust in NIMS-ICS before a need arises.

Stephen Grainer is the chief of IMS programs for the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFFP). He has served in Virginia fire and emergency services and emergency management coordination programs since 1972 – in assignments ranging from firefighter to chief officer. He also has been a curriculum developer, content evaluator, and instructor, and currently is developing and managing the VDFFP programs needed to enable emergency responders and others to meet the National Incident Management System compliance requirements established by the federal government. From 2010 to 2012, he served as president of the All-Hazards Incident Management Teams Association.

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Status of Preparedness: Emergency Medical Services

By Seth J. Komansky

Responders in the pre-hospital emergency medical field must be in a state of readiness at all times. Working on the front lines of an emergency incident requires the ability to leverage external resources, the determination to harden operations, and the skillfulness to manage patient surge.



Emergency medical services (EMS) leaders and practitioners must consider the planning process for, response to, and recovery from major incidents while contemplating domestic threats, including: manmade incidents such as acts of terrorism; biological epidemics such as an Ebola outbreak; or naturally occurring events such as weather-related events. Although it may be difficult to escape the numerous daily and routine responsibilities for EMS systems, it is important to take steps to ensure a state of readiness for the unique operating environments and scenarios. During these challenging times, EMS is looked to as the experts for pre-hospital care and the gateway to the larger healthcare continuum.

Leveraging External Resources

The modern EMS delivery model differs greatly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction with no standardization. Even within certain municipalities, fragmentation exists between: the numbers and types of agencies responding such as fire-based, private, government-based, third service (i.e., an independent municipal/government-based EMS agency that operates in a jurisdiction alongside a fire department and police department), hospital-based, or volunteer organizations; competing factors such as for-profit versus not-for-profit; and personnel pools ranging from fully staffed career EMS to volunteer EMS requiring members to respond from home or work. With all of these, and many other considerations, no single solution for preparedness exists to satisfy every community's needs.

However, what most EMS systems can agree upon is that a major incident requires external resources and help from surrounding agencies to respond to the initial impact. Jurisdictional lines and corporate boundaries that exist during routine day-to-day operations must be broken down during these major incidents. In order for this to occur, leaders must come to the table to break down the barriers that exist to create plans and train personnel well ahead of a major incident. These plans and trainings must be inclusive and adaptable to the variety of threats mentioned earlier.

“With information flowing into the Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris crisis unit, it was quickly confirmed that the attacks were escalating dangerously and the potential for large numbers of patients existed.”

EMS has moved to a checklist-style clinical environment in an effort to minimize clinical misadventures when treating low-frequency, high-risk critical patients. A similar paradigm shift must occur to cultivate a culture for responding to the unknowns of the low-frequency, high-risk major incident in an effort to support the incident commander down to the street paramedic or emergency medical technician to best manage the challenges.

Hardening Operations

As a discipline, EMS should consider the concepts and strategies to integrate an all-hazards outlook in the planning process to improve preparedness from the local to regional perspectives. Similar to colleagues in other disciplines such as law enforcement and across the federal spectrum of agencies, EMS must determine how to match their elevated security postures or stand up and enhance capabilities during necessary times. Hardening EMS operations and supporting a proactive approach “left of boom,” or before the figurative and possibly literal bomb goes off, becomes essential in recognizing the co-location of EMS on the front lines.

Some ideas that could be implemented to harden EMS operations and enhance preparedness as a discipline might include:

- Educating providers for indicators to recognize suspicious activity
- Developing mobilization plans for civil unrest or other patient surge incidents and perform co-discipline training so that embedding with partner agencies becomes more seamless
- Testing plans for bio-events including mass vaccination clinics
- Increasing communications across sectors, disciplines, and jurisdictions ahead of major incidents, meeting the key players before staffing a command post
- Learning and understanding available state and federal resources
- Increasing regionalized communications and plans

Aligning with the final bullet point, one of the greatest vulnerabilities the EMS systems around the nation face is [surge capacity](#), or the maximum delivery of services a system can provide if all available and potential resources are mobilized. Surge capacity is typically associated with hospital systems but, similar to most hospitals, the reality is that most EMS systems already operate at full capacity. The unthinkable occurring during the busiest hour of the day would further complicate the situation.

Managing Surge

It is important to know how an EMS system would respond to an event requiring an unfolding incident command structure with a large demand for transport units in a short period of time. In most cases, systems do not have a callback program in place to recall employees. Coupled with budgetary constraints and the rising costs of ambulances and

equipment, even if a callback system does exist, there are still questions about how these personnel would be deployed in the field for a major incident.

A complicated solution, which requires early collaboration, communication, and planning transcending the corporate healthcare world, involves regionalization. Establishing a plan with a bed monitoring system with a real-time ability to reconcile available beds at the regional level across all partner hospitals would benefit:

- The patient day-to-day by cutting down on wait times and improving satisfaction ratings; and
- EMS in the event of a large-scale incident or a maximum capacity time by incorporating this into destination planning and transportation decision-making.

By developing this situational awareness, EMS could avoid overloading any single hospital and ease the global system that exists.

One successful example of this was seen during the November 2015 Paris attacks, where a coordinated terrorist attack resulted in explosions and active shooter scenarios occurring throughout the city, which included a hostage situation and massacre inside a concert hall. With information flowing into the Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris (APHP) crisis unit, it was quickly confirmed that the attacks were escalating dangerously and the potential for large numbers of patients existed. The APHP is [Europe's biggest entity](#), able to coordinate 40 hospitals, 100,000 health professionals, 22,000 beds, and 200 operating rooms. For the first time ever, the "white plan" was activated – recalling staff, mobilizing hospitals, and releasing beds to cope with the influx of the expected wounded. Further, contingencies were put into place for "reservoir" capacities, which included other area hospitals and university hospitals that were more distant from Paris proper with a cache of available helicopters to evacuate the wounded if necessary.

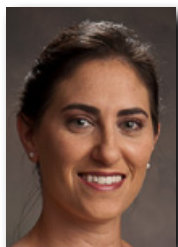
It is important for EMS leaders to consider the big picture and think outside the box when planning in 2016. A reality exists that no single EMS agency has the resources to handle the influx of patients that could occur during the unthinkable event. Acknowledging the need for a collaborative approach, networking with regional colleagues to strengthen relationships for multidisciplinary partnerships ahead of a major incident, and working to develop plans to respond to large-scale incidents across jurisdictional lines will be the key to success.

Seth J. Komansky, MS, NRP is a district chief with the Wake County Department of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Raleigh, North Carolina. He is assigned to the operations division as a field supervisor in Raleigh's downtown district and manages Wake County's Medical Intelligence Unit. Additionally, he serves as the statewide EMS field liaison officer (FLO) coordinator at the N.C. Information Sharing and Analysis Center (NC ISAAC), North Carolina's state fusion center based at the N.C. State Bureau of Investigation. He has a Master of Science in Homeland Security Management from the Homeland Security and Terrorism Institute at Long Island University.

Planning & Operations: Two Sides of the Same Coin

By Sharon Russell

For an emergency, planning personnel provide direction and operations personnel provide action. At first glance, their roles may seem very different but, in reality, they are dependent on one another – like two sides of the same coin. Effective planning requires operational input, and effective operational response requires careful and comprehensive planning.



The importance of plans: “You have to have a plan so that you know at which point you’ve deviated from it,” Coast Guard Captain (then Commander) Peter Martin shared this advice at an internal planning meeting in 2012. Although that thought did not make much sense at the time, the brilliance of the perspective has slowly become clear. For example, if someone is in Florida, driving north to Atlanta, Georgia, and ends up south in Miami, then he or she certainly deviated from the most direct route, but may still make it to Atlanta – eventually. However, the extra detour was not part of the plan.

Plans provide structure, guidance, and the ability to react to the expected and unexpected. A plan can be as innocuous as determining that a car requires a full tank of gas before driving across the state of Florida or as robust as securing hotels, providing clothing options, and accounting for personal medical care for a two-week European tour. Without a plan, it is difficult to know what should be done, how to do it, and how to prepare for the unexpected.

Planning: Contingency vs. Action Plans

There are essentially two types of plans: contingency plans and action plans. According to the [Oxford Dictionary](#), contingency plans are “designed to take a possible future event or circumstance into account.” [Another definition](#) is, “a course of action to be followed if a preferred plan fails or an existing situation changes.” Contingency planning affords opportunities to think of all of the horrible things that could happen and then determine the best course of action if any actually do occur. An action plan, though, is immediate and pressing. This type of plan is developed after an emergency happens.

For example, a contingency plan for a home fire might include prevention steps like smoke alarms and strategically placed fire extinguishers. It may also include clearing dried underbrush that could catch fire outside, preparing a list of emergency phone numbers, and having a pre-designated safe place to meet. However, even with all of the precautions, the home could still catch on fire. In this case, the local fire department will respond and quickly develop an action plan. This (action) plan is not about preventing the fire, but instead includes new and immediate factors like the type of fire, the appropriate substance to fight the fire, steps to prevent the fire from spreading, where to fight the fire first, which equipment is best suited, etc. As with the firefighters’ action plan, which is specific to this fire, an action plan is designed to address the immediate needs of a particular situation – right now.

Two different plans are created for the same situation. Contingency plans are not time constrained and anticipate occurrences, whereas action plans have no time to lose and require immediate reactions to specific issues. A contingency plan allows for long-term training, while responders using an action plan must already know their jobs and be able to do them.

However, the two plans are more similar than different especially regarding general content. Each plan establishes objectives: long term or short term. Each plan includes available response equipment, even if the equipment lists are different. Each plan should be reviewed routinely to ensure accuracy and relevancy, specifically with respect to phone numbers and emergency contacts. Most importantly, those with operational experience must vet each plan to ensure effectiveness and plausibility. Planners need operators and operators need planners.

“Plans provide structure, guidance, and the ability to react to the expected and unexpected.... Without a plan, it is difficult to know what should be done, how to do it, and how to prepare for the unexpected.”

Among response professionals, planners and operators are two sides of the same coin. They have different skill sets, different immediate goals, and very different measures of success, but they must work together to achieve the common goal: safety. Too often, however, they speak different languages and set different priorities making cooperation unnecessarily difficult.

In the house fire contingency plan, for example, a planner can say that there needs to be an evacuation strategy. But only someone with local knowledge of the area, the home, and the family can determine if the evacuation strategy is realistic. For example, exiting the front door may not be safe because it faces a very busy street, perhaps the keys to the back door were lost years ago, or maybe stairs could present a problem. In addition, an evacuation plan for a cottage in the country on three acres of land is very different from a plan to evacuate a condominium in a high-rise building. Both homes need an evacuation plan, but operationally these plans are different.

Operations: Incident Command

The Incident Command System (ICS), now well adopted throughout the United States as an incident response management tool, specifically lays out the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Section and the Operations Section. Those in the Operations Section focus on the tasks, whatever they might be, and seek to achieve objectives set forth by the incident command. They are charged with completing their assignments within specific timeframes and reporting back if they are unable to do so. Those in the Planning Section, on the other hand, must look ahead and determine what is next. A lot goes into figuring out the plan for the next operational period, but it all hinges on whether or not the Operations Section has already completed its assignments, and if not why not.

Operational people do things and spend time in “the field.” They physically act and produce visible outcomes. It is often said that, “Operations doesn’t do paperwork.” Planners, on the other hand, do lots of paperwork. They staff command posts or sit at desks – writing, thinking, and documenting. When people engaged in daily operations say that they have “got this,” it means that they will handle whatever the issue is, without any instruction. They have done it before – no problem. To a planner, those words are like fingernails on a chalkboard as they wonder: “Got what, exactly? When? How? With what tools? What’s the PLAN?!”

Consider the 2012 Republican National Convention, held in Tampa, Florida. Setting aside VIP transit plans, parties, and protestors, the convention took place in August, and August on the Gulf of Mexico means one thing: hurricanes. Contingency planners had to figure out how to coordinate continued security on the water while getting boats and crews to safety in the face of impending severe weather. Everyone knew a hurricane was a real possibility, but issues arose in the details, such as determining: (a) which boats would come in first – with only one available boat ramp, a schedule would be necessary; (b) how long it would take to pull a boat out and get it ready to move; (c) where the boat would go; (d) how long it would take for the boat to get there; and (e) what logistical concerns would exist for stowing so many additional boats that were not usually in the area. The time to answer these questions was before the wind picked up and lightning began to strike.

In order to sort these tedious details, the operators – those who best know their boats and their crews – are the right people to provide the planners with such important specific details. However, pulling operators off their boats for meetings creates frustration. Boat operators have work to do – “real work” on the water – and may feel that, “Nothing important gets done in a conference room!” That feeling may change, of course, when boat operators look to the planners to find out what the plans are to keep their teams safe. The planners could not do this type of planning without the operators’ help.

Planners and operators must join forces to accomplish the same goal. Planners are not there to make operators miserable, to waste their time in meetings, or to keep them from doing their jobs. Planners support the important work of securing waterways, fighting fires, evacuating residents, and other operational tasks. Resolving the communication gap and smoothing the relationships between planners and operators cannot be found in additional training. Exercises and drills do not result in epiphanies. Continued open conversation is perhaps the best and easiest way to vent frustrations and ultimately work together – like two sides of the same coin – to plan and respond to anything and everything life presents.

Sharon Russell, LCDR U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Reserve, attended Officer Candidate School at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, after earning her M.A. in Environmental Policy. She served on active duty and then joined the Reserves, working full time as an emergency response consultant at The Response Group, where she has been for 10 years. She returned to active duty to serve as the USCG Maritime Security Project Officer for the Republican National Convention in 2012. She is still in the Coast Guard Reserves, assigned to the District 7 Contingency Planning Department.

Railroad Ties Communities Together

By James Metzger

With Amtrak's rail lines spanning communities across the United States (and parts of Canada), it is in a prime position to engage the whole community and to build national resilience. Planning, training, and educational efforts provide a way to bring employees, passengers, and other community stakeholders into the preparedness cycle.



In 2012, Amtrak created the Emergency Management and Corporate Security (EMCS) department, which focuses on emergency preparedness, business continuity, corporate security risk strategy, and training and exercises. The department utilizes a whole community approach throughout program implementation. Whole community to Amtrak means planning and preparing for emergencies while promoting resilience with employees, passengers, and the cities that Amtrak serves through intercity passenger rail service. With a wide and diverse community, from New York Penn Station – North America's busiest passenger terminal – to Vancouver, British Columbia, Amtrak works to meet the needs of all the communities it serves by focusing on several core principals: engaging communities; empowering local action; and planning, training, and educating community members.

Engaging Communities

Amtrak recognizes that, when communities prepare together, they can collaboratively protect against, respond to, and recover from incidents across the country. Amtrak's partnerships extend not only to federal, state, local, and tribal partners, but also to host railroads, private sector industry, and passengers. The composition of Amtrak's community and the needs of its partners, regardless of the size of the city or geographic region, are taken into account when planning and preparing.

Building and maintaining partnerships is essential to the overall success of whole community engagement at Amtrak, which serves more



Source: Robert Kaufmann/FEMA

than 500 stations in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and three Canadian provinces, and transported approximately 30.8 million passengers in 2015; 11.7 million along the U.S. northeast corridor alone. With this vast area, it is important to foster partnerships that understand commonalities and overlapping interests. EMCS management is dispersed regionally to educate and integrate into the community, recognizing that partnerships are more sustainable and attractive when all parties benefit from the relationship. Widespread engagement allows Amtrak to understand the necessities of stakeholders when developing programs that promote safe and secure passenger rail travel.

Empowering Local Action

Amtrak's 11 regional emergency managers, located at the largest stations across the country, help prepare their communities for emergencies along America's Railroad®. These regional emergency managers are supported by a corporate planning and preparedness

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team that develops strategic programs to be implemented in each region. Regional managers conduct training, integrate into regional emergency planning processes, and educate people on the benefits of rail travel. By embedding into the regions, communities are empowered to play an active role in developing ways in which they can leverage

Amtrak as an asset in an emergency and are better prepared in the event of rail incidents in their communities. The teamwork of EMCS in implementing whole community programs is a key component for success.

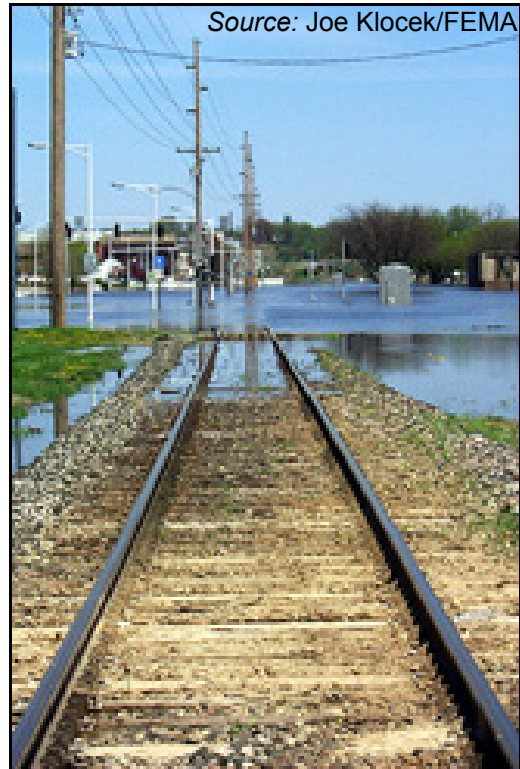
Planning, Training & Educating Community Members

Planning with stakeholders to devise preparedness initiatives allows Amtrak to more effectively react to the needs of the whole community. Integration and education of emergency plans is instrumental in aiding in a response. Training and exercising these plans strengthens regional responses to an incident given that response and recovery operations vary across the enterprise. Training extends to onboard train crews and their ability to provide emergency instructions. Developing realistic training scenarios allows employees to communicate and coordinate with passengers and first responders and builds resilience. In addition to the robust training program delivered to its employees and stakeholders, Amtrak produces security awareness campaigns to educate passengers.

Education of passengers on preparedness activities is an integral part of Amtrak's whole community approach. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Amtrak maintains a television network in stations that provides vital security

information to passengers. The Amtrak Security Awareness Network (ASAN) presents educational programming informing passengers on how to prepare and be safe as they travel, with 59 monitors in 22 of Amtrak's busiest stations. Programming includes evacuation instructions (in multiple languages) of stations and trains, ways to report suspicious activity or behavior through Text-A-Tip, as well as key national campaigns such as [Run. Hide. Fight.®](#) in the event of an active threat. Text-A-Tip allows passengers to report suspicious behavior directly to the Amtrak Police Department, National Communications Center via SMS text messaging to APD11 (27311).

In addition to the ASAN, Amtrak representatives value the opportunity to have face-to-face interactions with partners and passengers to reinforce the importance of preparedness. EMCS collaborates with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, local response agencies, the American Red Cross, and more during outreach events such as National Preparedness Month. This provides local communities with tools and ways in which they can be better prepared for emergencies on or off the Amtrak system. Building a resilient community strengthens ways in which the whole community is informed, engaged, and prepared.



To learn more about Amtrak's Emergency Management & Corporate Security Department, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AvV8nvCCqs> or contact EMCS at EMCS@amtrak.com

James (Jim) Metzger was appointed as the deputy chief of emergency management in Amtrak's Emergency Management & Corporate Security Department in August 2012. He is responsible for leading Amtrak's planning, preparedness, training, exercise, disaster response, and recovery effort enterprise wide, as well as compliance for 49 CFR Part 239 with host railroads and federal partners. From 1990 to 2008, he worked for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority Police Department, where his last position was as counter-terrorism director and commander of special operations. He directed officers in special weapons and tactics, canine, intelligence, and community policing. He authored, "Preventing Terrorist Bombings in United States Subway Systems." He is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. He graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice and world religions from Chestnut Hill College, in Philadelphia. In addition, he earned a Master of Arts degree in security studies (homeland security and defense) from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and a masters in organizational leadership from Villanova University in Pennsylvania. He is a Department of Homeland Security, certified Master Exercise Practitioner, and Business Continuity Professional; as well as a Certified Business Continuity Professional from Disaster Recovery International.

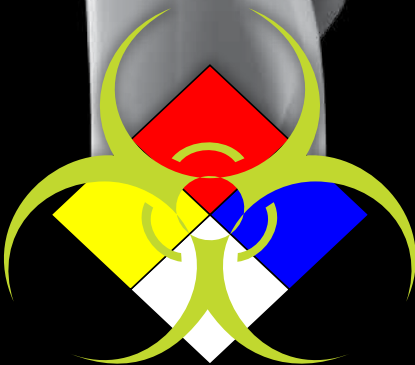
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