

Emergency and disaster planning. essay

[Business](#), [Industries](#)



Emergency and Disaster Planning. Emergency and Disaster planning, is a discipline that deals with management and curtailing of risk.(1) On the surface it involves preparing, supporting and rebuilding society when human made or natural disasters occur.(2) However it is an intensive exercise that continuously involves all individuals groups and societies in hazard management with a goal of avoiding or ameliorating the disasters impact.

(3) The decision on plan support and management in response to a given risk depends in part on the perceptions of those involved(4). The response to risk, the responsibility and management of hazards involves the integration of emergency plans at all levels of government and non governmental structures. All activities geared at the response to risks or even the management of possible risk affect all organizational units- individual, group or community- wherever they exist in a given environment(5) Today in the USA this responsibility is bestowed upon the civil defense or within the conventional structure of the emergency service like the fire department and the Red Cross.

(6) However the private sector also has a similar emergency management that integrates with the one mentioned above, it is called the Business Continuity Management. Today, civil defense focuses on protecting civilian populations in times of peace as well as war, especially in the event of natural and human made disasters. The European Union calls civil defense, the term, civil protection, for the nations of Europe it emphasizes the political and security dimensions.(7)EMERGENCY PLANNING MANUALS. These manuals are guidelines, a step by step outline on devising and carrying out a

strategy plan in quick response to the restoration needs of the community, employees and company.

There are a number of factors involved in the ultimate strategy of addressing a (would be) disaster. Organization and planning are very important: disaster planning and response services need to have an operational base or head quarters, that is accessible and having a proper organizational structure(8). Prudence is significant, especially for the managerial positions in determining the kind of risk, the response required and the necessity of selecting leaders to head response teams. The nerve center should also have functional communication systems in approaching specific risks, the head quarters should have access to quick reference information, for example the blue prints of a building, the terrain of a flooded region, the drainage capacity and even the course of entry and exit of a disaster struck region.(9) The management should regularly ensure that the emergency team is regularly trained and availed with support and resource for response to given disaster. The command center needs to understand the utility of electric distribution system well, and in the case of failure of the grid, they should have a means of power back up.

With proper training, emergency teams should be able to handle underground facility locations. Significantly, there is need to develop an SOS system; a messenger and Mail delivering system to ensure proper communication(10). The issue of health insurance and indemnity requirements for the rescue team should be highly considered. Geographical information system can also be involved for the challenge of responding to

storms, Earthquakes and other risks and should therefore be mustered for use by the rescue team.

The employee service is also part of the emergency planning and response. The employees and family members should be educated on the occupational risks and related stress (levels)(11). Employees going out to work should be well equipped, a checklist can provide ample information on what must be carried. Significantly, there is need for counseling of employees and family on the work and the extremities that may arise. For these individuals, the community should step in and donate to their families especially when they are in dire straits and bread winner is out there responding to an emergency. (12) Financial assistance systems in the form of cash advances and loans including compensation policies and procedures for the emergency team must be laid down. Lastly the most significant factors are safety and morale(13).

The employees should be in “ proper standing” having good training and equipment that ensures they are safe. Through indoctrination of the crew and various team building activities they should be encouraged along their daily chores(14). Restoration in response to emergencies should involve the presence of propagation checklists for the emergency, coordination and logistics of the area or field and rhyming emergency service with the other utilities available. The crews should be registered, tracked, placed and coordinated while responding to disaster(15). A perimeter should be set that defines the extent of operation, within which or close to which staging sites should be set up. Some significant aspects that should be considered are

lodging, (street) lighting, radio systems, meal, and water and ice availability during restoration. Communication is important and can be boosted using cellular phones, storm radio systems, paging systems or mobile antennae(16). There should be an inventory system.

For this dictates the planning, selection and management of staging sites. The issuance and return of material, stocking and distribution are managed by the inventory team. On the peripheral end, though, are the supportive external services. Government coordination, integrated with federal response plans are important in availing essential commodity and service. (17) There is need to have a way of mitigating the risk at hand within set guidelines of safety. The quest for information by the public should be met by establishing an information desk that could have a public relation officer. This department can coordinate with local TV, Radio and newspapers(18) Emergency service providers should have communication links with their clientele. They must also have access to the clients premise and hence be in a position to provide disaster mitigation services(19). The providers should train their clients on proper safety procedures and response to risk.

In the event that an emergency service is provided, there is need to establish prioritization among clients. Based on, the danger posed or even the people exposed to such threat(20). This involves knowing the essential clients for example residential, commercial and industrial clients, the provider might assign a bigger team to an explosive factory than he might a

residential home. There should be back up from damage claims, covered by insurance as well as appointment of tender contracts.

Lastly, disaster planning manuals involve an audit and account of managerial, service and hazard extent. Documentation of such audit is then done. As rebuilding commences, this documentation will provide a bed rock to understanding better ways of design and organization.(21) Individuals and teams of response to emergency, in the spirit of boosting their morale should be celebrated and awarded for their service. The occurrence of disaster is never as timely, but the sharing of the lessons learnt goes a long way into helping others who might go through such disasters. Types of emergencies.

1) Severe weather and flooding emergencies.

They may involve winds. For example, 50-mph gusts that affect driving conditions for high sided vehicles especially on exposed roads or bridges. 90 mph gusts make driving extremely dangerous, causing uprooting of trees, great damage to buildings and potential sever structural damage(22). Snow, especially blizzards causes severe drifts, likely making roads impassible.

Other weather aspects are heavy rain, fog, icy roads, glazed frost and lightening strikes. Floods also affect people by displacing them from homes and making places impassible. 2) Transport AccidentsThe availability of several air corridors to and from international airports like JFK or Heathrow, Railway lines connecting cities and mazes of road, demand the establishment of emergency control centers, Transport emergencies also include goods in transit accidents.

(23)3) Fire explosions and dangerous buildings. These are possible in industries, in chemical handling and processing as well as high pressure vent systems(24). 4) Animal related attacks. The example of attack by a dog and suspected rabies infection is a case in point.

This might also involve abrupt infestation of a region by animals like snakes and other wild animals(24). 5) Pollution and contamination. This can occur in sewage systems, water courses, foodstuffs and atmosphere. Toxic substances may be solid, Liquid or gaseous. In its nature the harmful element may be chemical toxic and explosive(25). 6) Hazard sitesIndustrial and other concerns that handle risks substances that through accident or negligence on danger the public living or working in the area.(26)7) Acts of terrorismResponse to this is coordinated by the security forces, and includes the example of the attempted bombing in London and the 9/11terrorism acts(27).

Emergency Security ResponsibilityFor this research, we shall take the example of the state of Iowa. After the September eleven attacks in USA, the state of Iowa integrated homeland security responsibilities into the duties and expectations of the Emergency Management Division. The management Division became the Homeland security and Emergency Management Division.(28) The mission of the division spells out its responsibility: to support coordinate and maintain Iowa state and local homeland security and emergency management activities, to establish sustainable communities and assure economic opportunities for Iowa the citizen. In the official website of the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency

Management, it is recognized that “ while terrorism threat is relatively low in Iowa Floods, tornadoes and plane crashes can and do happen.” The Iowa code 30 states that; The Iowa Emergency Response commission’s mission is to assist in improving preparedness for handling chemical accidents, promoting cooperation among state, local government and Industry hence increasing public awareness of chemicals in community as well as building databases(29). Such an emergency response structure is replicated in the other states of the USA In the management of domestic incidents, President Bush on February 28, 2003 issued the Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD – 5) five.

He HSPD-5 established single comprehensive national incident management system. According to the Home Security Act of 2002 the Department of homeland security (DHS) had the responsibility of co-ordinating federal emergency operation within the USA. In this case Federal emergency operation include, preparing for, responding to and recovery from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies.(30) HSPD-5 , however expanded this by creating a National Incident Management System and National Response Plan, both of which provided an approach for federal states and local government to effectively prepare for, respond to recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size or complexity.(31) The EPA has the responsibility of responding to incidents involving oil, hazardous materials like radionuclides. In addition, EPA has the responsibility of maintaining specialized assets such as teams, stock piles and caches at levels consistent with national preparedness goals(32). The DHS under the HSPD-8, has the secretary of Homeland Security as the principal federal

official in the coordinating the implementation of all hazard preparedness. HSPD-8 is an advancement of HSPD-7(33).

HSPD-7 assigned the EPA and other federal agencies general responsibilities related to critical protection of infrastructure. One of the key resources, the EPA (USA Environmental Protection Agency), has ensured that it protects and manages, is the drinking and waste water infrastructure.(34) Significantly, EPA has assessed and reduced vulnerability to potential terrorists attacks, is planning for and practicing response to emergencies and incidents and is developing new security technologies for detection and maintaining contaminants, in addition, to preventing security breaches.(35) Bomb threats and strikes At the individual level it is important to report possible imminent life threatening situations be it day or night.

In the report there should be a description of the emergency, a bomb threat or strike in the case. Every bomb threat and strike must be taken seriously(36). For the case of a bomb threat, one measure is to avoid panicking stay calm and be friendly and attend to the caller if he is on phone. Memorize voice or tone of caller, listen for background noises and write down time of call. The police are to be notified once call is through. Evacuation from building is only if responders (police, fire fighters, or bombs squad) order one(37) However a bomb strike is different, for all the wrong reasons, damage may already have occurred.

(38) The obvious response by security forces is to rush and secure the area. In the wake of setting such as perimeter, the emergency teams move in and help administer first aid, resuscitating and availing necessary resource like IV

- infusions (from paramedics), fire extinguishers (for the fire department), and the “ bomb squad” (that comes in to check for presence of hazardous material).(39) Bomb strikes are best handled by professional security units.

The security and emergency response teams in the USA after the 9/11 incident are well equipped to work within their responsibilities in such situations. EXECUTIVE SUMMARYThe largest effort in disaster management is to prevent hazards from developing altogether. Since this is not absolute, the achieved level is the reduction of such disasters once they occur.(40) Mitigation therefore, can be a strategy before after (during recovery) a disaster. Mitigation avails structural or non structural resource.

For example flood planning may use the structural resource of non-essential land like parks to act as flood zones (41) Legislation allowing for such use is non structural. Before mitigation is done risks should be identified. Preparedness is an element necessary for possible disaster strikes.

Multi – agency coordination is developed, training and maintenance of service and manpower is also upheld. (42) Stock piles can also be done. Response is the immediate action to disaster occurrence. It involves mobilizing respondents in the disaster area.

Recovery the final step is aimed at restoring the area to its previous state (43)All the work discussed in the previous topics is only possible with these in mind – mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

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