

Case study on hurricane katrina

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Hurricane Katrina is categorized among the strongest storms to have hit the United States coast in over a period of one hundred (100) years. On Saffir-simpson scale, the storm winds are in category three. The sustained winds had a speed of 125m/h and a minimum central pressure of 920 mb. It caused devastation in the states along the central gulf coast which include cities like LA, Mobile, New Orleans, Gulf port, and AL.

It slammed in to the gulf coast on 29th August 2005 causing a lot of destruction to the beach fronts of Louisiana and Mississippi. It also led to displacement of one million persons and the death toll was estimated to be almost 1800 persons. About 80% of New Orleans was submerged after the levees were breached trapping about 20% of the total cities population leaving them without food, power and drinking water.

Homeland security department and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were responsible for disaster preparedness in the country. In fact, from sources, Hurricane Katrina is among one of the most anticipated disaster of the modern times. It had also stipulated that incase of its occurrence the cities that would be most hit would be San Francisco and New Orleans. A day before it struck National Weather Service warned of a looming hurricane and went further ahead and gave details that the hurricane would cause deaths and human suffering. Although the department of homeland Security had unveiled a National Response Plan in January, the department secretary, Michael Chertoff did not put it into action immediately after the disaster but waited for two days. This delay resulted to the increased number of the death toll in the country. The response from these two departments was slow, and it cost many lives. The heads of the FEMA had

been political appointees with no disaster management experience while all the professionals had been laid off.

In September 2004, the department of Homeland Security issued a task order for Innovative Emergency Management (IEM) costing \$199,969 for complete development of SE Louisiana catastrophic hurricane plan (U. S. House of Representatives 2006). The local catholic churches decided on not to participate in evacuation of the residents of new Orleans who lacked cars as a move to minimize liability risks until the new legislation had been passed. In June of 2004, the Louisiana legislature rejected a proposed immunity measure whereby the people who owned vehicles would help in evacuation of the carless affected. They rejected the bill arguing that the drunk drivers would escape with the responsibility in case they caused an accident. In the spring of 2004, the coalition of state, local and federal officials joined the American Red Cross, faith based groups, and the general New Orleans community in the launching of ' Operation Brothers Keeper'. The program was funded through a state firm insurance. They made plans to use school buses and other private means of transport in evacuation of the carless victims. They also acknowledged and asked for government intervention since they did not have enough resources to be able to evacuate everybody. In June of 2005, the authorities distributed evacuation maps to the New Orleans residents. These showed the residents the evacuation routes that they would take in case of any disaster. The Red Cross and the department of Homeland Security paid the cost of printing the maps. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and development did distribution of one million maps. In the same spring, Amtrak agreed a deal to

help evacuate the residents of New Orleans in case of a major hurricane disaster. In August of 2005, the Louisiana officials urged the church leaders to tell the residents in the low-lying areas to evacuate (U. S. House of Representatives 2006).

There were several lessons learnt from the hurricane Katrina. On disaster preparedness, the organizations concerned in helping of those that, required help had to be unified in management and in response. Thus, the public, private and the organization need coordination for effective evacuation. Through effective coordination, command and control would be present within the federal government. This way the roles of every organization present would be well and clearly stipulated. They learnt that integrating the military capabilities with evacuation program would greatly help in evacuation. Communication challenge was also another factor that affected the evacuation of affected. As a result of destruction of the transmitters and infrastructure information passing is made difficult. The organizations lacked means of communication to ensure coordination of activities. They now should ensure that they put communication methods that are sufficient and reliable (The White House, 2006).

On addition to that, all the parties involved should develop flexible, transparent, and modern logistic systems based on contracts in supplying of commodities during the emergencies. Public and private should also replace the state and local logistical systems in resource distribution. Transportation department should also always be prepared to help in mass eviction incase the state and local government is incapacitated.

Improvements made include city assisted evacuation plan, introduction of

National Emergency Child locator centre to aid in the locating of children, establishing of other institutions to help in detection of looming hazards. FEMA administrator post was added who would aid in coordination services.

References

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