

Introduction to emergency planning and operations

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Introduction to Emergency Planning and Operations: Emergency Management Plan Introduction The need for effective emergency response systems can not simply be overstated, especially with the recent terrorist actions and threats. As a result, it has become necessary for all elements of the society-public and private, and communities - to be prepared for emergencies through establishment of Emergency Response Plans. Such plans are required to counter emergencies through prevention, rapid response and recovery regardless of the type, cause, extent and location of the emergency. Another consideration is that they are required to harmonious so as to increase efficiency (Erickson, 2006). As a result, the approach adopted by a community emergency response steering committee is quite important in determining the effectiveness of the plan. Other important aspects of the committee's work include ensuring that the Emergency Management Plan being developed contains several basic elements for its effectiveness, is synchronous with the National Response Framework, is aware of some of the most common errors that hinder response efforts and takes into consideration the emerging issue of bioterrorism. This is an analysis of the considerations discussed by the community's Emergency Response Planning Committee (ERPC), examining the possible setbacks and effectiveness of the desired plan. Analysis of the Approaches Proposed the ERPC In the meeting by the community's ERPC, two perspectives of direction to be followed by the proposed plan emerged; first, I informed the committee that the best way to begin the plan was by

identifying the different types of emergencies and disasters for which the proposed plan is supposed to address. Other members of the committee were of the view that the better approach is to make an inventory of the resources available for use by the response team so as to be aware of the limitations faced. The most effective approach to an Emergency Management Plan is to make an account of the possible emergencies that may face the community. According to the National Response Framework (2008), planning for emergencies is an inherent responsibility that involves continuous anticipated actions, hence maximizing the opportunities and aid in guiding the response actions. The framework recognizes that the determination of advance actions is a principle benefit of planning. Anticipating the emergencies that may occur makes the response plan capable of guiding response to any eventuality, while the hard-line belief that the budget should dictate the planning would lead to a situation in which the plan does not cover certain emergencies that may occur. Key Elements that should be included in the Emergency Response Plan The proposed plan should include the following four elements for maximum effectiveness; the personnel, the equipment, the procedures, and finally the flow of communication in case of an emergency (Emergency Management Plan, 2011; Eisenman et al, 2007). Clear definition and deliberations on these components are necessary, since an emergency will require the right personnel whom have been provided with the right equipment and know all the procedures to undertake; communication is important in organizing the personnel. Harmonization of the Community's Response Plan with the National Response Framework In the meeting, several members of the ERPC

were opposed to the proposed plan being part of a collaborated response compatible with the National Response Framework. This should not be encouraged since compatibility in fact entails three of the five principles of emergency Response Doctrine; engaged partnership, collaborated response and unity of effort through a unified command. Incidents are handled at the lowest level possible but all levels are prepared to provide any necessary help (National Response Framework, 2008). The ERPC's position is clearly at odds with the requirements and would lead to lack of unity of purpose and ineffective judgment.

Common Errors in Emergency Response Plans

Ironically, the three most common errors in response plans all stem from the planning itself; poor planning, lack of training and expertise and finally failure to keep the plan up-to-date. Most plans do not clearly define the four elements discussed above, hence poor planning; the employees or volunteers lack the necessary level of training and expertise that should come through structured training sessions and drills; finally some of the plans are not regularly revised, hence lack the capacity to address emerging issues such as bioterrorism, besides containing archaic and technology-starved procedures.

Planning for Terrorism and Bioterrorism

The September 11 attacks made terrorism a real threat to Americans and all other nationalities around the world (Rasmussen Reports, 2011). The threat of terrorism has also made it apparent that there is need for respiratory protection and management of bioterrorism (Abatemarco et al, 2007). The community's ERPC should take emergency response to bioterrorism and terrorism seriously and hence make efforts to train the trainers and employees. This will not only be proactive of them but will aid in boosting

public confidence since it is a reality that the question of terrorism lingers in the mind of most individuals. The State of Disaster Management on a Global Scale Currently, a lot of gains have been made in terms of emergency response systems across the world, but there however remains a great deal of work that needs to be done. Some of the gains made include formation of emergency response committees for preparation of emergency management plans, enhanced cooperation across all levels of disaster management including internationally, enhanced recovery from disasters, improved training and better equipment to counter disasters. However, the fact that many events still catch a lot of societies unprepared is proof enough that a lot still needs to be done. There is a wide gap between disaster management in the developed and in developing nations, long term measures for periodical events are yet to be adopted, and finally most nations are yet to put in place measures to address bioterrorism. Conclusion Disaster preparedness is a critical part of today's society hence committees to deal with emergency response issues have been set up. These committees have to make several considerations that will either result in effective emergency management plans, or dysfunctional ones. An effective emergency response plan should be developed on the basis of the disasters that are likely to occur, and should be integrated harmoniously into national frameworks for optimal operations. The plans should include proper training of the employees, sufficient facilities and proper communication systems for effective procedural disaster management. Other considerations include preparedness to counter terrorism and bioterrorism. In conclusion, disaster management is headed in the right direction but a great deal of effort will

need to be undertaken before stating that the world is in a better state in relation to disaster management. References Abatemarco, A., Beckley, J., Borjan, M., & Robson, M. (2007). 'Assessing and improving bioterrorism preparedness among first responders: A pilot study'. *Journal of Environmental Health*, 69(6), p. 16-22. Retrieved September 9, 2011 from ProQuest Eisenman, D., Cordasco, K. M., Asch, S., Golden, J. F., & Glik, D. (2007). 'disaster planning and risk communication with vulnerable communities: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina'. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(S1), p. S109. Retrieved September 9, 2011 from ProQuest Emergency Management Plan, (2011). 'Illinois State University'. Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://www.ehs.ilstu.edu/downloads/EmergencyManagementPlan.pdf> National Response Framework, (2008). 'Department of Homeland Security'. Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrf-core.pdf> Rasmussen Reports, (2011). 'War on terror'. Retrieved September 9, 2011 from http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/mood_of_america/war_on_terror_update