



Catastrophic Response

Coordination | Communication | Unity of Effort

Working together makes us stronger

www.regionalcatplanning.org

What is the job of the emergency manager? To support incident operations with information, coordination, and resources; to address impacts to individuals and families, especially those with mobility, communication, transportation, supervision, or medical needs; to address impacts to infrastructure critical to the economy and to the government. If this is a tough job during a typical emergency, what can we say about its difficulty following a catastrophe? Catastrophes create enormous disorder that overwhelm our best capabilities and preparations. That is the mission of the RCPT: to bring the resources of an entire region together to create order from chaos.

EXEC'S PODIUM

REGIONALITY – IT'S A GOOD THING

BY JOSEPH F. BRUNO – Commissioner – New York City Office of Emergency Management

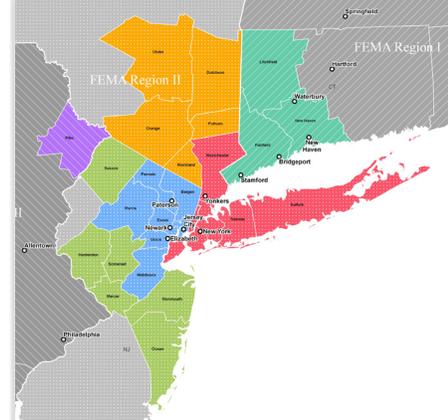


The federal government got it right with the Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant Program. This program supports planning on a regional basis and nothing could be more important to emergency management and to our country. This is a new approach and the timing is right. Historically homeland security grants funded the assets – such as specialty vehicles and equipment – that individual jurisdictions need to make themselves safe. But the impact of a catastrophe will not be confined to a city, county, or state: it will affect the entire country. The planning we are doing today ensures that these assets and programs can cross borders and work effectively together.

Some have suggested that planning with all of its formality and voluminous detail is not a good way to spend scarce grant dollars. Indeed, I recently met with some folks who suggested that plans never “really work” and circumstances are “never what you planned for.” That may be cocktail party banter but it is a commonly held belief in this business of emergency management. But ask someone familiar with large and complex field operations – DoD for

instance – and they will assure you that success is impossible without planning. The focus of our planning is to establish a structure within which ever-changing, on-the-ground problems can be solved as a region. Without the relationships borne out of this planning, I shudder to think of the confusion that would reign following a catastrophic incident.

Our plans are based on familiar concepts that somehow elude us in the implementation: common-operating picture, unity of effort, unity of command, integrated response. With persistent focus we are invading the nation's thinking. These critical concepts now permeate the NRF, the National Disaster Housing Task Force and FEMA's Whole of Community and Maximum of Maximums doctrines. Our region is leading the way for the nation and has become a local solution to a national problem. The bottom line is that no local, state, or federal government can go it alone. The only way to a successful catastrophic response is with all assets and capabilities integrated and working together. FEMA now “gets it” and its action in funding this program is proof of its new-found wisdom. Who would have thought this possible in the aftermath of 9/11? We all did!!



NEWS

NY State DHS&ES Intelligence Product Receives National Recognition

New York State Intelligence Center–Counter Terrorism Center released *The Vigilance Project*, a comprehensive, analytic report that examines major terrorism cases that have taken place against the Homeland since September 11, 2001. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano referenced NYSIC and *The Vigilance Project* in written testimony submitted to the House Homeland Security Committee. For more information go to www.dhSES.ny.gov.



RCPT and FEMA executives during a Regional Integration Center (RIC) strategy session

CATASTROPHIC QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

“We have had great success with the RCPG taking the first step in building regional plans for catastrophic events. The next and bigger challenge is to work with our federal partners to ensure our efforts are fully integrated into federal operational planning with the support of all federal agencies.”

–Joseph Picciano – Deputy Director, NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness

GET INVOLVED

Conferences:

On May 9-10, 2011 the NY-NJ-CT-PA RCPT Regional Logistics Program will hold *LogCon2011*, a conference designed to introduce and reinforce the concept of a *Universal Logistics Standard*. For more information, please contact Nancy Harris at nharris@regionalcatplanning.org.

Simple Steps for Effective Planning with the Disability Community

Emergency planning for people with disabilities and incorporating functional needs in services can be complex and challenging, but the planning process does not need to be difficult. The fundamentals of effective planning still apply.

Successful planning requires not only engaging the disability community in the process, but also effectively incorporating disability service providers, advocacy organizations, and other non-governmental, faith-based and community-based organizations into the planning process to create plans that fully integrate functional needs support services.

Simple steps to building and maintaining planning partnerships:

- *Speak out existing organizations and groups and present ideas to them. The groups you want to reach may already be meeting and happy to have you engage them.*
- *Connect with umbrella organizations that serve large constituencies. These groups will help your plans truly reflect the needs of a wide cross section of the community.*
- *Identify partners whose service and advocacy goals match your planning initiatives. Working together will serve to benefit everyone.*
- *Build a broad planning group to present ideas at reoccurring meetings. Gain each other's trust through frequent communication and planning activities that reflect the group's feedback.*
- *Break down challenges into obtainable goals with clear end points. This will encourage continued involvement from the group.*

Effective planning groups marry the group's subject matter expertise with emergency management's experience building operational plans. Emergency managers do not need to be experts in all aspect of the disability community and the disability community does not necessarily need to understand the ins and outs of government planning. There is benefit in recognizing that each part of the group cannot achieve its goals without the other. By working together these groups can identify and fill gaps to create plans that better reflect the service needs of the entire community.

Collectively these efforts not only lead to better plans, but build legitimacy within the community at large.



Aaron Belisle leads RIC engagement with Disability Advocates

Regional Infrastructure Protection and an Integrated Private Sector

The Regional Infrastructure Protection Plan (RIPP) improved planning and preparedness in this electricity infrastructure sector through a dedicated and collaborative integration with the private sector. Moreover, we employed replicable tools to achieve this objective. Using technical assistance funding, the National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center (NISAC) was contracted to model a catastrophic scenario drawn from real events.

The resulting analysis was used as a basis for a series of facilitated discussions which brought together private sector expertise and the responsible government agencies. This structure was able to ground the discussion around the specifics of the region's electricity system while opening up a constructive discussion of vulnerabilities. To overcome adversarial positioning in this understandably sensitive topic, discussions structured closely around those requirements, external to the system itself, needed for the electric utilities to restore power. By focusing on areas of government responsibility, deeper information sharing was fostered and the plan's primary audience was served. As the RIPP is to be used by emergency managers, we emphasized

areas concerning government actions ranging from security and logistics supports to waivers and emergency generation.

This structure achieved remarkable cooperation across the public and private spheres, garnered positive reviews from participants, and successfully drove a grounded planning process for coordinating regionally in a disaster. We found gaps and continue to address them identifying, for instance, the lack of government preparedness for rolling blackout scenarios. The RIPP is tackling this gap with an annex set to delineating the staffing, timeline, and coordination issues unique to such events.



Former Plan Manager Brian Gardner meeting with regional stakeholders

Next Steps for the RIPP – A Rolling Blackout Appendix

As the tragic events in Japan illustrate, rolling blackouts are a key strategy that utility companies may need to employ following serious damage to electrical infrastructure with an indefinite timeline for a return to normalcy. Whether a prolonged outage is caused by natural or manmade events, rolling blackouts are essentially a method for rationing electricity. Predictably, outages necessitated by rolling blackouts are likely to cause confusion and consternation for the public and primary and cascading economic impacts for business and industry. In short, they present an opportunity to mitigate those negative consequences through planning and coordination.

While our utilities have rolling blackout plans that can be tailored to meet the requirements of a manmade or natural disaster, one key finding that emerged from the RIPP workshops was the lack of training or planning on the part of government for supporting rolling blackout scenarios. Consequently, the next project the RIPP team will undertake is the coordination and collaboration necessary between industry and the public sector during periods of rolling blackouts. As with the baseline



plan, the Rolling Blackout Appendix will focus on the government's responsibility in supporting a functional and operational reality that is both stressful and confusing. Identifying optimal off-times and size of the rolling outage areas for purposes of law enforcement and emergency management coordination is a key task for this endeavor. Leaning heavily on the close ties forged with our electrical sector partners during the initial RIPP activities, this effort will look to industry best practices to arrive at a plan that supports the industry's restoration efforts and meets the public's need for predictability, safety, and security.

STAY TUNED

Regional Evacuation Plan Updates in the upcoming issue of *Catastrophic Response*. Don't miss:

- **Synching executive decision-making for evacuations:** The Regional Evacuation Plan lays out a regional timeline for critical decisions made by executives for evacuations from coastal storms and no-notice scenarios.
- **Enhancing coordination through tools and checklists:** Across the Project Area, planning efforts are developing tools, checklists, and protocols that can aid in regional decision-making.
- **Improving existing evacuation operations:** The Best Practices Tools for Evacuation Plans highlights specific areas that local jurisdictions may explore to improve evacuation operations and planning.