



Emergency Incident Management
Paul Matheis
Newport Beach Fire Department, CA



EMERGENCY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

The successful management of an emergency event begins long before the time of the initial time of alarm at a local fire station. Any success is largely due to the efforts and activities undertaken to ensure efficient and effective response procedures by the stakeholders tasked with the political and statutory responsibility. In this document I will highlight the areas that should be addressed so as to begin to establish the foundation of a proper emergency response framework for local, state and federal agencies and authorities. This paper will speak to the need for an effective emergency management plan, a proper first response capability, the ability to develop a robust and reliable logistical support system, and a planning and intelligence gathering system that is reliable, able to transfer and disseminate essential information in real time between disciplines, and can be used to develop a common Incident Action Plan (IAP).

A critical component of an efficient and effective emergency management plan is the support from all of the stakeholders. This includes not only all of those agencies responsible for prevention, protection, response and recovery, but the political partners as well. To be successful, it will take support from the people in positions of power to provide the transformational leadership necessary to ensure that the power struggles across the jurisdictional agencies and disciplines do not interfere with a proper outcome. By clearly establishing the factual support for areas of responsibility via a memorandum of understanding, prior to an event, the focus can be on more productive activities following an event. The importance of periodic training, where people can learn to understand the challenges of the colleagues, via realistic exercises, will help to shorten the awkwardness sometimes seen when thrust into an emergency event scenario with people unknown to one another. Furthermore, the need for an annual gap analysis to determine the proper path for corrective improvements is critical.



The ability for a first response capability, adequately staffed and sufficient to provide the necessary capability for accurate damage assessment, and able to begin rescue operations for the initial operational period, is fundamental. Additionally, a reliable and redundant notification system, and an established resource ordering procedure system is important to the expected outcome. Furthermore, a radio communication system, that is both reliable and interoperable, will be necessary for the safety and success of the responders.

The development and establishment of a robust logistical support system to ensure rapid and continued operations, throughout the incident, will be necessary. The building of an efficient resource ordering point that includes the coordination between all of the disciplines, using common terminology and typed resources as found in National Incident Management System (NIMS) manuals is the foundation of a successful response performance. By pre-planning specific scenarios, in an all-risk analysis, adequate staging areas and industry best practices can be learned prior to an event.

The development of an effective and cohesive intelligence and planning section is critical to the proper management of the incident(s) following an event. The gathering and sharing of vital information from field operators toward a common goal will be necessary in the effort to save lives, reduce suffering, and limit the environmental impact. This can be best accomplished by using common terminology, as mentioned in the National Response Framework, in the development of a common IAP for the support and operations personnel. This important component of the response is best developed beforehand, as those law enforcement members responsible for the management of sensitive information can become familiar with the civilian partners involved in the management of the incident.



One of the most important functions of the management of an incident, both large and small, is the movement of critical information in the operations section and the support section. However, during an event scenario, a proper and unified message to the media is a critically important component. The political partners that provide the leadership prior to the event will expect that information management will be timely and accurate. The maintenance of a professional relationship with the news media, especially in a world of 24-hour news, can have a profound effect on whether the public sees the response to the incident as efficient and proper.



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