

## **Briefing 2015 EPC SLS**

### **Background**

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) National Capital Region (NCR) Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) is sponsoring the 2015 National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council Senior Leader's Seminar (SLS) on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at the Silver Spring Regional Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. The SLS brought together senior leaders to discuss the operational construct for a multi-jurisdictional event in the NCR. Employing a facilitated discussion driven framework, the SLS focused on collaborative jurisdictional partnerships that emphasize the need for coordination, collaboration, and joint decision-making in a regional construct. Specifically this SLS focused on the role of the MWCOG jurisdictions, federal government, and partners in response to the potential consequences of a Category 2 hurricane impacting the NCR.

The intended outcome of the SLS was to provide an understanding of the way regional coordination and decision-making occurs under the RECP for all types of incidents.

A formal After Action Report (AAR) is in preparation which will contain in depth analysis of the session and recommendations from the Exercise Planning Team. An update to the EPC based upon AAR findings will be provided at a later date.

### **Issues/Implications -**

#### **Attendance:**

Attendance was about 33% below the number who registered. The session started late because of substantial late arrivals and expectations that others would arrive, rather than being no shows. A brief was provided to the group on the Baltimore City Incident. It was agreed to be a very relevant topic, but was not programmed into the agenda, thus delaying the session even further from its original start time. This time was not recoverable and necessitated truncation of the session at several points. Also, Maryland State representatives were not present significantly impacting on the issue of regional interagency coordination. Only one elected official attended and two CAOs were present.

#### **Major Topics of Discussion:**

**Corrective Action Program:** There was formal recognition by the EPC members present that there is no corrective action program in place for regional lessons learned and corrective actions. There are some components of a system in place, such as an inventory of potential corrective actions derived from past exercises, however there is no centrally managed program to afford an objective analysis and accounting of lessons learned, categories of issues, functional database, process model or other documented system. The establishment of a defensible corrective action process tied to the regional strategic planning process merits examination.

**Multi-agency Coordination Center Concept:** The Exercise Planning Team designed aspects of the SLS to test a "proof of concept" for establishing a NCR Regional Multiagency Assistance Center (MAC) to support uniquely regional concerns in a Type 1 Incident. This was done by design to facilitate discussions about the perennial issue of operationalizing the RECP. The concept was not fully examined due to the

absence of State of Maryland representatives. Discussions did effectively contrast the potential District of Columbia role in a MAC versus the Commonwealth of Virginia presence.

**Regional Emergency Support Functions (RESF):** The presentation on Regional Emergency Support Functions (RESF) uncovered some varying perspectives with respect to the roles of the RESFs, in steady state and in an incident. Further, the some were concerned that participants not confuse an “ESF” as commonly used in federal, state and local organizations since the early 1990s. Some insisted that RESFs are not operational and others described how they were operational, both in steady state and in in an incident.

**NCR Incident Complexity Types:** The concept of Incident Types for the NCR based upon ICS/NIMS complexity levels appeared to have traction among participants, as a means to forecast the anticipated organizational engagement of the various regional partner agencies in increasing complexity incidents.

**Regional Perspective in an incident:** The answer to the fundamental question of “who maintains the regional interests and focus foremost during an incident” was not resolved. It was clear that there is little motivation for giving regional priorities attention over more pressing jurisdictional issues. One senior leader remarked “the RECP is just a warm blanket to assure the public that there is a plan in place if something should happen.”

**Questions for discussion by the EPC or Discussion**