Progress Report of the Incident Management and Response Oversight Committee

Better Preparation

Better Coordination, Communication

Better Decisions

Better Results

Frederick County

City of Frederick

Montgomery County

Loudoun County

City of Gaithersburg

City of Rockville

City of Takoma Park

City of College Park

City of Greenbelt

City of Falls Church

District of Columbia

Town of Bladensburg

City of Fairfax

Arlington County

City of Bowie

City of Manassas

Fairfax County

City of Alexandria

Prince George's County

City of Manassas Park

Prince William County

Charles County

DRAFT

Presented to the Emergency Preparedness Council
November 14, 2012

Report of the Incident Management and Response Oversight Committee

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FINAL REPORT OF THE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE (IMR) OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Summary

Since the release of the *Report of the Steering Committee on Incident Management and Response* in November 2011, area officials have been moving forward on a wide range of actions to improve regional coordination, communication, preparedness, and decision-making. Several of these actions aided officials during the 2012 Derecho storm and will help them during the upcoming 2012-2013 winter season and 2013 Presidential Inauguration. Over the past year, officials made significant progress in key areas noted in the summary below. See the matrix at the end of this section for a full list of follow-up actions for each of the IMR recommendations.

Sharing information among officials. Several IMR recommendations focused on needs related to this issue—staff dedicated to regional situational awareness, better integration of transportation and emergency management data, and improvements to the conference calls used by officials before and during incidents.

- The overarching recommendation of the IMR report was the creation of a Regional Incident Coordination (RIC) Program. In April 2012, a RIC Program manager officially opened an office at the D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (DCHSEMA) to gather and disseminate regional incident information. The Program has begun sharing regional updates and participating on regional incident conference calls.

- Emergency managers and transportation officials, through the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program, have significantly improved communication and coordination. MATOC's Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS) has been enhanced and now includes information that supports evacuation plans. More emergency managers have been trained to use RITIS, and MATOC staff has been coordinating with the new RIC staff.

- Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS)/snow call procedures were updated in December 2011. MATOC is now a key resource on the calls for transportation issues. COG is also enhancing the calls with new technology that will be in place by early 2013.

Messaging to the public. Public information officers (PIOs) and transportation officials are getting more real-time incident information to the public and have continued to promote personal preparedness and 'stay put' messaging.

- In December 2011, www.capitalregionupdates.gov, a Virtual Joint Information Center (V-JIC), was launched. The web site, established by Fairfax County for the region, is a one-stop shop linked to emergency alerts, weather, traffic incident info, utilities updates, and other news from area governments and agencies.

- PIOs continue to use social media along with media outreach to communicate to the public before, during and after weather events and other incidents. Before the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 winter seasons, they have also been leading a campaign, "Get Where You Need to be Before the Weather Gets Bad." And MATOC has added social media feeds to alert stakeholders and the public to transportation issues. MATOC's website also now features publicly available traveler information at www.trafficview.org

Updating employee release policies. The IMR Committee found that employee release decisions have a major impact on transportation conditions and the region's overall incident management and response. This made the participation of the region's largest employer, the federal government's U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), on the IMR Committee crucial and extremely beneficial.

- In December 2011, OPM added three new options to its emergency tool kit including a staggered early departure with final departure time, immediate departure, and shelter-in-place. These additional announcements give flexibility to respond to a variety of regional events.

- To assess how many businesses follow federal release policies and allow telework during emergencies, the Board of Trade conducted a survey of its members. Over a third of businesses said they follow the federal guidelines. Only 18 percent of businesses said they do not allow working from home during weather emergencies.

Prioritizing backup power for critical infrastructure. The IMR Committee noted many critical facilities in the region, including most traffic signals, lacked backup power. Transportation officials, emergency managers, and critical infrastructure owners have efforts underway to address these issues.

- In the past decade, a number of regional events have severely taxed existing emergency standby power systems or exposed significant flaws that led to catastrophic failure of a backup power system, such as during the 2012 Derecho storm. Officials are working on projects with Verizon, area military officials, and water, wastewater, and healthcare facilities. For example, homeland security funding will upgrade backup power at four regional trauma centers.

- Regional officials have conducted surveys to assess the number of signals with backup power and their installation costs. Early results show there has been a notable increase in the number of backup systems over the past half year. Officials have also agreed to coordinate on backup power deployments to better align with emergency plans.

Following the release of the original IMR report, the Oversight Committee continued to meet and track progress on its recommendations. Now with these actions well underway, the Committee anticipates handing off the responsibility of overseeing these projects in the coming year to the appropriate standing groups like the region's emergency managers, transportation officials and public information officers—rather than creating a permanent regional oversight body. These individual groups will continue to report their progress in improving regional incident management and response to the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council, the region's Chief Administrative Officers, and their technical committees. IMR Committee members did express interest in meeting on an annual basis to continue sharing information across their areas of expertise.

National Capital Region
News and Information

Virtual JIC
CapitalRegionUpdates.gov

Federal Dismissal and Closure Policies

MATOC

Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination Program
www.matoc.org

Backup Power for Critical Infrastructure

SUMMARY MATRIX – ALL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Status
SECTION 1: REAL-TIME INFORMATION AMONG OFFICIALS	
Officials should create a Regional Incident Coordination (RIC) Program with appropriate staffing responsible for monitoring the region, distributing/redistributing relevant information, and sharing a picture of the regional situation with decision-makers.	In April 2012, the RIC Program commenced at D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA). It now shares regional updates, participates on regional incident conference calls, and was active during the June 2012 Derecho storm. Emergency managers are refining the program's tasks and determining how it can best serve the region.
Emergency managers should work together to identify a medium for sharing information between various Web Emergency Operations Center (WebEOC) versions.	Information sharing is taking place among DC HSEMA, Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), and the NCR.
Transportation officials should continue to work with emergency managers to integrate transportation data with WebEOC and other programs.	Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS) training for emergency staff has improved situational awareness of the transportation network. Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program staff has also worked closely with the new RIC Program staff.
Emergency managers should conduct regional exercises to test evacuation communication/coordination plans.	In 2012, officials have conducted multiple exercises which test evacuation communication/coordination plans.
SECTION 2: REAL-TIME INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC	
Public Information Officers (PIOs) should use and promote the regional Virtual Joint Information Center (V-JIC) established by Fairfax County on behalf of the region.	In December 2011, www.capitalregionupdates.gov was launched. The web site is a one-stop shop linked to emergency alerts, weather, traffic incident info, utilities updates, and other news from area governments/agencies.
PIOs should continue media outreach and developing new tools to communicate directly with the public.	Before the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 winter seasons, PIOs have led a public awareness campaign, "Get Where You Need to be Before the Weather Gets Bad."
PIOs should continue to educate the public on the importance of "staying put" during many incidents, and they should communicate personal emergency preparedness messages before the start of the winter.	In addition to using the "stay put" message when appropriate, officials continue to stress the importance of personal, family, business, and school preparedness.
SECTION 3: REGIONAL COORDINATION	
Transportation officials should continue supporting efforts that will enhance the information provided by the MATOC Program, widen its distribution to others, including the public, and provide funding for 24/7 operations.	MATOC has received full funding support for each of its core activities and staff already have the ability to ramp up to 24/7 operations on an on-call basis. MATOC has added social media feeds to alert stakeholders and the public to transportation issues. MATOC's website www.matoc.com also features publicly available traveler information at www.trafficview.org
COG should upgrade Regional Incident Communications and Coordination System (RICCS)/snow calls by adding a web-based platform to improve information sharing among participants and allow more time for decision-makers to consider actions, outcomes.	RICCS/snow call procedures were updated in December 2011. COG is also enhancing the calls with new technology that will be in place by early 2013.

Recommendations	Status
Area decision-makers and transportation officials need to work more closely together through RICCS/snow call.	MATOC is now a key resource on the calls for transportation issues.
Officials should coordinate with employers in their jurisdictions on release policies, and all government, private, and nonprofit employers should review and update closure/dismissal policies, establish and/or expand alternate work schedules and telework before/during emergencies, and use new technologies to communicate with employees.	In December 2011, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) added three new options to its emergency tool kit including a staggered early departure with final departure time, immediate departure, and shelter-in-place. A Board of Trade member survey found over a third of businesses said they follow the federal guidelines.
Transportation officials and PIOs should focus on advance planning strategies to discourage trucks and commuters from being on the roadways during adverse conditions.	Officials have been promoting a number of initiatives to keep trucks and commuters off dangerous roadways, including PSAs, the V-JIC, Maryland State Highway Administration's interactive emergency truck parking map at www.chart.state.md.us, and traveler information sites www.511virginia.org and www.md511.org
Area officials should continue pursuing measures to ensure vehicles are towed as quickly as possible.	Officials conducted an internal review of DC, MD and VA laws with respect to abandoned/disabled vehicles and found no apparent concern that there is insufficient law. Each jurisdiction handles these vehicles in different ways.
COG should convene electric utilities to discuss vegetation management, reliability improvements, public communication, and storm preparation and response.	Communications have been established with utilities and emergency management agencies to determine what is needed prior to, during, and after an event.
Utilities and local governments should share storm preparedness assessments and develop more formal emergency coordination procedures.	Both local government and the electric utilities in particular have taken steps towards integrating their planning and response operations but there is still much work to be done.
Emergency managers should continue working with regional stakeholders to identify and ensure backup power to critical facilities, and all jurisdictions in the National Capital Region should conduct an assessment of and expeditiously install back-up power for major traffic signals.	Officials are working on backup power projects with Verizon, area military officials, and water, wastewater, and healthcare facilities. Regional officials also conducted surveys to assess the number of signals with backup power and their installation costs. Early results show there has been a notable increase in the number of backup systems over the past half year.
SECTION 4: DECISION-MAKING	
Officials should modify, reaffirm and expand upon existing mutual aid plans and ask other federal agencies and utilities to become a formal part of the region's emergency response network.	Officials note recent examples of closer coordination between governments and electric utilities. In addition, after outages resulting from the Derecho storm, Verizon is working closely with 9-1-1 Directors serving on a special COG task force. A report on their work will be forthcoming.
Officials should strengthen the current framework for regional coordination and communication, rather than pursue the creation of a new decision-making authority.	The COG Attorneys Committee concurred with this recommendation and has not pursued creating a new decision-making model for the National Capital Region.

SECTION 1:
REAL-TIME INFORMATION AMONG OFFICIALS

(1A) Regional Incident Coordination (RIC) Program

Implementation of the Regional Incident Coordination (RIC) Program commenced on April 2, 2012 under the auspices of the D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency with oversight by COG. The newly-hired Program Manager, Beauty Stephens, officially opened a RIC office dedicated to gathering/collecting and disseminating regional incident information in order to create a common regional operation picture before, during and after an emergency or disaster within the National Capital Region.

When the severe weather front – now commonly known as a "Derecho" – was predicted to impact the region in late June, RIC staff initiated phone calls, RICCS alerts, and monitored the WAWAS circuit. Incidentally, program staff spent June 29th in Montgomery County meeting with Councilmember and IMR Chair Phil Andrews and Emergency Director Chris Voss. Program staff worked alternating 12-hour shifts for seven days during the activation of DCHSEMA's Emergency Operations Center for the Derecho event and the lingering power outages. The Program Manager initiated WAWAS reports and participated on RICCS CAO calls, sharing regional situational updates.

This program recently acquired a user license for a situational awareness dashboard in order to provide visualization and contextual collaboration when needed to generate real time operating pictures to NCR decision makers during an emergency.

Funding has been identified for the RIC Program for next year through federal homeland security funding for the region. In 2013, the RIC Program will continue its outreach to regional entities. The region's emergency managers will work together to refine the program's tasks and determine how it can best serve their needs and be of greatest use to decision-makers in the National Capital Region.

(1A) Information Sharing Through Web Emergency Operations Center (WebEOC)

In 2005, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) had already been using WebEOC for over a year and had a very strong, well established program. The District of Columbia was in the process of procuring WebEOC as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia. The localities within Northern Virginia were awarded a grant to procure, install, train and implement a WebEOC program. Within five months, the statewide system at MEMA, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), D.C. and NoVA (11 jurisdictions) were operational and linked together sharing information. Three years later, the regional WebEOC program had grown into what is now known as the NCR WebEOC program.

The current WebEOC implementation in the NCR is robust and provides for a strong means to share information through WebEOC FUSION. It now includes Prince George's County, Montgomery County, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority all of whom are fully integrated into the program. It has strict governance and requirements in place for its use.

The NCR WebEOC program has worked with VDEM on how best to integrate the two systems. Because VDEM's system is incident independent versus the NCR system which is incident based, officials had not worked out a complete integration. Both programs would require significant changes made to the operating procedures and boards before they could be fully interconnected.

Because both VDEM and the NCR use WebEOC FUSION, officials have been able to set it up so that anyone at VDEM can look at the NCR system boards for information about what is going on in the NCR and vice versa. With this integration, officials can now share information between the NCR and the state, while not allowing the entire state (all of the other localities) to see what the NCR is doing. Virginia localities can only see what the state has on its system.

If both the NCR and VDEM wanted to create a more seamless sharing of information, officials could utilize the enhanced capability of WebEOC. The integration would require changing existing WebEOC boards, agreeing on a process, and then creating new permissions so that a locality in Virginia could see both the state and NCR systems and vice versa. This would be a fairly complex project and would involve every locality in the Commonwealth in order to create a true comprehensive sharing of data. If MEMA were to consider doing the same with each locality in Maryland, a similar process would have to take place. Prior these activities taking place, some form of governance would need to be developed and accepted by all parties.

Although this is a capability that is available, none of the groups has yet assessed the work needed to complete this process. It is important to understand that today there is information sharing taking place among DCHSEMA, MEMA, VDEM, and the NCR System.

(1B) Emergency and Transportation Information Integration

A great deal of progress has been made in this area primarily through the coordinated development and use of joint transportation and emergency management capabilities within the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS). For example, RITIS now includes evacuation support layers that include the following information for the entire National Capital Region:

- Evacuation routes

- Staging areas

- Comfort stations

- Public shelters

- Hospitals

- Traffic control points

- Government vehicle fueling stations

All of this information is combined together with real-time status of the transportation system using data supplied by the MATOC partner agencies. The new emergency management functions are based on the latest plans and information as supplied by MEMA, VDEM, and the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (DC HSEMA). The District Department of Transportation has recently initiated an effort to update their Emergency Transportation Annex, the output of which will be incorporated in RITIS.

MATOC staff have coordinated with several local and state emergency management agencies (DC HESMA, VDEM, Montgomery County) to train essential staff on the RITIS platform. Attendees are briefed on the purpose of MATOC and are given an overview of the core functions of RITIS. Hands-on training provides attendees insight on how to use RITIS as part of their day-to-day operations to improve situational awareness of the regional transportation system. MATOC anticipates additional training sessions throughout the upcoming year.

During emergencies, MATOC staff have also worked with the RIC Program to use DC HSEMA as a backup site. This was successfully tested during the June 29 Derecho Storm in which MATOC conducted normal operations from DC HSEMA's Joint All Hazards Operations Center. MATOC Staff plan to operate from this location each month to further strengthen its relationship with the RIC Program and DC HSEMA.

MATOC staff continue to monitor WebEOC on a daily basis and have the ability to post to the regional NCR boards should a need arise. RIC Program staff actively post MATOC and other transportation related information to the regional NCR boards as well. Work is currently underway to examine alternative methods for integration of RITIS and WebEOC systems and will continue through spring of 2013.

'Hands-on training provides attendees insight on how to use RITIS as part of their day-to-day operations to improve situational awareness of the regional transportation system.'

(1B) Regional Evacuation Exercises

There has been training and successful testing of emergency manager/MATOC coordination during recent events like the June 29, 2012 Derecho storm. In addition the region has conducted or plans to conduct the following exercises which will test evacuation communication and coordination plans.

- On July 4, 2012, DCHSEMA conducted an evacuation exercise in conjunction with the fireworks and activities on the Mall.

- On July 24, 2012, the Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise was conducted and included participants from throughout the region. The exercise was based on a no-notice evacuation of DC. It included a tour of key evacuation points along the NoVA evacuation route, evaluation of the feasibility to execute the plan in a real-world setting, and identification of gaps that exist in the current Northern Virginia Evacuation Transportation Plan.

- On September 19, 2012, emergency managers conducted a workshop to develop a work plan to address four priorities: planning, training, exercises, and information sharing. Each of the four priorities are being addressed at emergency managers' monthly meetings over the next year. Operationalizing the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) is critical to the success of the regional evacuation/sheltering efforts and the emergency managers will be working with the Exercise and Training Operation Panel (ETOP) and others to exercise the RECP and other plans in the coming year. ETOP will be developing a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan and they are considering a regional evacuation exercise once DC, Maryland, and Virginia evacuation plans are all updated.

- On December 6, 2012, the Golden Triangle Catastrophic Exercise is being held in downtown DC. This exercise will bring together real estate professionals, emergency management leaders, and other officials from throughout the region to explore issues such as evacuation and shelter-in-place that would emerge during and after a catastrophic event. Participants will identify needs and vulnerabilities, and develop recommendations for both the commercial and public sectors. The goal is to reduce the impacts of a catastrophe through recommendations that, if implemented, will assist property owners/managers in a more rapid return to normal operations.

- In early January 2013, DCHSEMA will host a walk-through of Inauguration plans with regional emergency managers. The emergency managers will walk through a number of scenarios which will involve communications, information-sharing, evacuation and sheltering.

Evacuation Exercise in Conjunction with Fireworks

SECTION 2:
REAL-TIME INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC

(2A) Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC)

The regional Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC) had been a dream for R-ESF 15 for several years. Finally in 2011 – in the absence of any federal homeland security funding for this communications tool – Fairfax County funded the portal, utilizing the PIER System.

The VJIC, online at www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov, was "soft launched" in early December 2011 and publicly launched in mid-December.

The VJIC features several sections, including an "are you ready" area with preparedness information, an "around the region" section with links to jurisdictions in the National Capital Region, and a new "disaster assistance" section developed in conjunction with regional emergency planners.

Perhaps the most valuable page, however, is the home page, which features:

- A Latest News section

- An area where important regional information can be highlighted

- News feeds from NCR jurisdictions that features "real time" news from across the NCR

- Four key sections important to residents – Emergency Alerts, Weather, Traffic and Utilities – that are highlighted with large, colored buttons

- Current weather forecast and weather radar

- Widgets from FEMA, CDC, etc. that display relevant, timely, and updated preparedness and emergency information

- National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) alerts from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- Six content areas below the news section that feature various topics, including a preparedness video, "Be Ready | Make a Plan" and a constantly changing poll of NCR residents, such as "Have you updated your emergency supply kit this year?"

- An About the NCR section

- Important links to NCR jurisdictions, preparedness information, regional, and federal partners and stakeholders

**SUMMARY FROM
2011 IMR REPORT**

ISSUE:
There is no central web site where regional Public Information Officers (PIOs) can coordinate during emergencies and share real-time information with other officials, area residents and the media.

RECOMMENDATION:
PIOs should use and promote the regional VJIC established by Fairfax County on behalf of the region.

Screenshot of VJIC - CapitalRegionUpdates.gov

(2B) Media/Public Outreach

The region's public information officers coordinating through the Regional Emergency Support Function (R-ESF) 15: External Affairs conducted an extensive public education campaign for the 2011-2012 winter season. Among the highlights, the PIOs:

- Held an R-ESF 15 meeting on Thursday, October 20, at the American Red Cross in the National Capital Region headquarters building to unveil the regional "Get Where You Need to be Before the Weather Gets Bad" snow campaign. A draft proposal was presented to the regional communicators and public information officers to discuss and agree on common messages.

- On December 15, 2011, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administrator Craig Fugate met with regional communicators to share important winter preparedness messages, noting the importance of communications during weather events. At this regional event, R-ESF 15 also introduced its snow campaign to federal officials, regional communicators, and media who were invited to the launch. In addition, communicators discussed:

  - Social media use and #crisis data during weather events

  - Ways communicators could improve communications and develop/use new tools to communicate directly with the public (such as the FEMA app for Android users and Arlington Prepares app)

  - How to establish/strengthen relationships and set expectations to all work toward the common goal to provide good, timely, and accurate communications and messages throughout the National Capital Region during winter weather events

- Developed a print logo focusing on the word "SNOW – Stay off the roads, Not Out in the Weather" – as well as talking points for communicators and the media to use to educate the public on the need to not travel during inclement winter weather, which is important for safety reasons as well as to assist public safety and transportation officials to better perform their functions.

- Developed a video Public Service Announcement for use on NCR jurisdiction websites, television channels, and traditional television stations. This PSA was not only distributed to NCR television stations in a generic format, but also customized with local jurisdiction's information for their use on their television outlets.
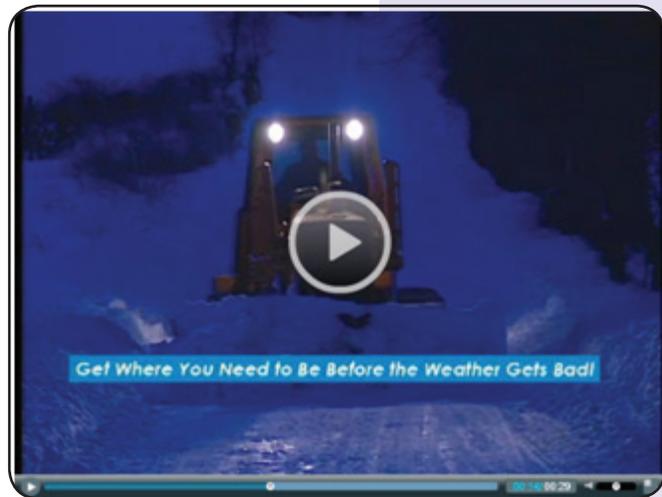

Winter Weather Video PSA

SUMMARY FROM 2011 IMR REPORT

ISSUE:
The public needs timely, accurate messages before and during incidents.

RECOMMENDATION:
PIOs should continue media outreach and developing new tools to communicate directly with the public.

(2C) Shelter-in-Place Readiness

September is Preparedness Month across the country. Every level of government and every organization associated with emergency preparedness should be stressing the need for personal, family, business, and school preparedness. The success of a response to a crisis may depend upon the public's decision to evacuate or shelter in place.

The lessons of 9/11, the January 26, 2011 snow and ice storm, and other events show that large evacuations take time and could inhibit emergency personnel from responding and vital resources from entering the region. It is imperative that the public understand their role and to ensure that they stay safe and that schools are prepared to shelter-in-place for up to 24 hours.

**SUMMARY FROM
2011 IMR REPORT**

ISSUE:
Sheltering-in-place is the recommended protective measure in many circumstances, but few employers/employees have such plans and key supplies in place.

RECOMMENDATION:
PIOs should continue to educate the public on the importance of "staying put" during many incidents, and they should communicate personal emergency preparedness messages before the start of the winter snow season.

SECTION 3:
REGIONAL COORDINATION

(3A) Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program

In FY 11 and 12, MATOC received full funding support (approximately $1.2M per year) for each core activity in its annual work program. These core activities include MATOC operations support; RITIS operations and maintenance support; RITIS enhancement support; and special studies, performance measures, and program support.

The current operations schedule for the MATOC Program is Monday through Friday from 4:30 AM to 8:00 PM. These hours cover the time periods when the majority of regionally significant transportation incidents take place, as relatively few no-notice multi-jurisdictional incidents take place during off hours.

However, the MATOC staff already have the ability to ramp up to 24/7 operations on an on-call basis and did so during the January 26, 2011 snow and ice storm. MATOC operations have also been extended on a number of occasions during weekend or off-hours special events with advance notice.

The new RIC Program can request an off-hours activation of the MATOC Program if and when necessary, especially in light of MATOC's remote operations capabilities. As noted previously, MATOC Staff has also worked with the RIC Program staff to use DC HSEMA as a backup site during emergencies for maintaining continuity of operations.

While the creation of a MATOC operations facility has been a significant program accomplishment, there have been a number of accomplishments (listed below) over the last fiscal year:

- Social media feeds established to alert additional stakeholders of regional transportation issues; the MATOC Alerts Twitter feed now has over 700 followers and continues to grow

- MATOC Staff have the ability to send RICCS pages for major incidents affecting the Interstates and NPS Parkways in the National Capital Region

- Streamlined electronic notifications by transitioning to a RSAN mass notification system enabling MATOC Staff to reach stakeholders though a single messaging platform

- Strengthened operational relationships between the National Park Service/United States Park Police and current MATOC agencies

- Strengthened operational relationships between regional transportation agencies through the MATOC Operations Subcommittee Transit Task Force

- Establishment of a Severe Weather Coordination working group to improve regional communication and coordination before, during and after significant weather events
- Launch of the MATOC website including a soft launch of publicly available traveler information (www.trafficview.org)
- Significant increase in RITIS usage by the public safety communities; there are now approximately over 1,500 RITIS users.

Significant enhancements to RITIS including:

- Addition of CCTV viewing capabilities in RITIS
- Addition of Road Weather Information Systems sensor data
- Expansion of probe speed data coverage to new routes
- The addition of evacuation support layers in RITIS
- Addition of transit system data
- Expansion of weather service data including forecasting
- Addition of personalized traffic alerts
- Addition of a points-of-interest search function

www.matoc.org

(3B) Snow Call Upgrades

Based on discussions in meetings held after the January 26, 2011 snow storm, changes were made to OPM policies and procedures. The NCR Snow Plan was updated and distributed to all key parties in December 2011. It is also accessible via the COG website. The RICCS/Snow Call procedures have been updated and they seemed to have worked well for the Snow Calls held during the 2011/2012 winter season. For example, one new procedure mutes all lines initially to improve the call experience for all participants.

COG also purchased WebEx a new technology that will enhance the RICCS/Snow calls. WebEx should be in place by early 2013.

(3C) Snow Call Coordination

Since the January 26, 2011 storm, COG has authorized MATOC staff to assume primary RICCS messaging duty for transportation issues. This move has improved the speed and detail of information available to decision-makers. With its elevated role, MATOC is now a key resource on RICCS calls for transportation issues. Additionally, the RIC Program Manager is now participating in the calls to ensure that key info is summarized for decision makers.

SUMMARY FROM 2011 IMR REPORT

ISSUE:
Improvements to the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS)/ snow conference calls can be made to enhance information sharing and help area officials make better decisions.

RECOMMENDATION:
COG should upgrade calls by adding a web-based platform to improve information sharing among participants and allow more time for decision-makers to consider actions, outcomes.

ISSUE:
Employee release and school decisions have a major impact on transportation conditions in the NCR.

RECOMMENDATION:
Area decision-makers and transportation officials need to work more closely together through the RICCS/snow call.

(3C) Closure/Dismissal Policies, Work Schedules

After coordinating with stakeholders, OPM added three new announcements to its emergency tool kit including options for a staggered early departure with final departure time, immediate departure, and shelter-in-place. OPM believes that these additional announcements will give the flexibility needed to respond appropriately to unfolding events.

The amended procedures are contained in OPM's *Washington, DC, Area Dismissal and Closure Procedures*, issued in December 2011. Further, FEMA and OPM collaborated to develop an Emergency Preparedness for Federal Employees in the National Capital Region brochure, issued in March 2012, which provides additional guidance to Federal employees in the NCR in preparing for and responding to emergencies.

To assess how many businesses follow federal release policies and allow telework during emergencies, the Board of Trade conducted a survey of its members. Over a third of businesses said they follow the federal guidelines. In addition, the survey found that only 18 percent of businesses said they do not allow working from home during weather emergencies.

SUMMARY FROM 2011 IMR REPORT

ISSUE:
Employee release policies and procedures are in place, but coordination among employers, use of alternate work schedules and telework, and message delivery needs improvement.

RECOMMENDATION:
Officials should coordinate with employers in their jurisdictions on release policies, and all government, private, and nonprofit employers should review and update closure/dismissal policies, establish and/or expand alternate work schedules and telework before/during emergencies, and use new technologies to communicate with employees.
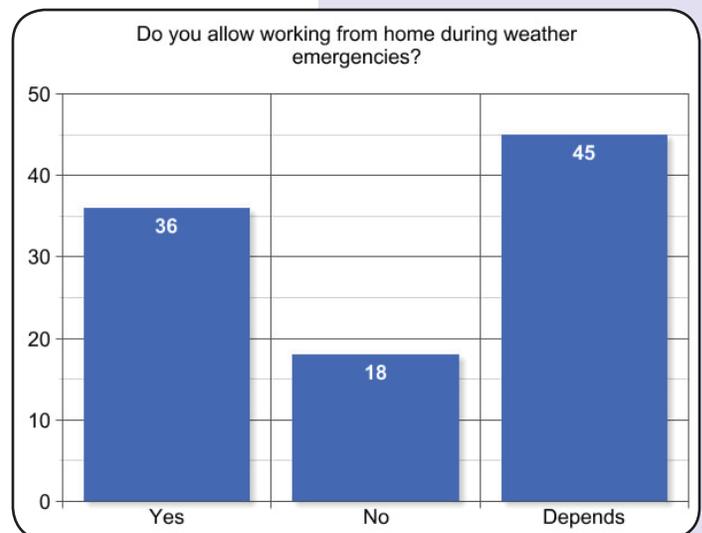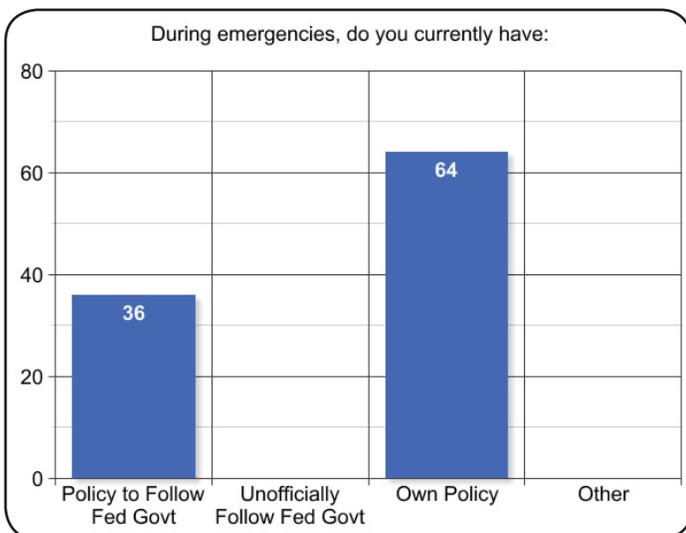
2012 Board of Trade Member Survey on Release and Telework Policies

(3D) Roadway Messaging

A number of activities in the NCR are providing the message to discourage trucks and commuters from being on the roadways during adverse conditions. Activities include:

The "SNOW" (SNOW - Stay off the Roads, Not Out in the Weather) effort from the NCR public information officers, with a video and written tips available on www.capitalregionupdates.gov. Key messages include:

- "Get Where You Need to be Before the Weather Gets Bad"

- Do NOT Travel During Winter Storms

- Weather Changes Quickly

- Listen to Local Officials

- Monitor the Weather

- Know the Emergency Plans for your Children's School.

The www.capitalregionupdates.gov website includes emergency messaging, including about adverse transportation conditions, and has links to transportation agency websites where this information will be highlighted during emergencies.

The Maryland State Highway Administration has created an interactive emergency truck parking map as part of their Coordinated Highways Action Response Team (CHART), available on the web at www.chart.state.md.us. Included are the locations of all full-time truck parking facilities in Maryland, as well as additional facilities that can be used during weather emergencies. A mobile phone app is also available for users.

The Maryland 511 traveler information system was launched in August 2011 with information available by dialing 511 or on the web at www.md511.org. Maryland 511 now stands alongside the Virginia 511 system (www.511virginia.org) available statewide since 2005 and upgraded in 2012. Both 511 systems can feature special emergency messages on the web and to all callers regarding adverse conditions and recommendations to stay off the roads. These sites and systems, as well as www.capitalregionupdates.gov, also feature ongoing information and updates on road conditions as storms progress and conditions change.
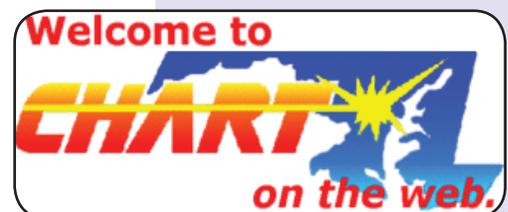
(3D) Towing Policies

Regional officials conducted an internal review of Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia laws with respect to abandoned/disabled vehicles. The findings indicate that there is no apparent concern that there is insufficient law. Each jurisdiction handles abandoned/disabled vehicles in different ways.

The concern about the abandoned/disabled vehicles being removed during weather related emergencies does not present a legal issue, but more of a practical issue. The cars will be removed from one location and placed in an area that has space available.

The terminology of disabled/unattended vehicles will need to be addressed since the term abandoned vehicles does not apply in this situation. Usually there are time restrictions in place before removing an abandoned vehicle.

(3E) Government/Utility Coordination

Pepco reported to COG that the utility has over 325 contractors on call to assist with tree trimming. It has a 4-year growth trim requirements that include removal of dead and dying trees, and trimming of trees protruding over power lines.

Communications have been established with emergency management agencies to determine what is needed prior to, during, and after an event. For the past two years, there has been in place a priority system that focuses on restoration of power for critical care facilities throughout the region. It was reported that Montgomery County was the first to participate in a Pilot Program during a recent storm situation. This resulted in a task force team being designated to respond to life threatening emergencies in the county. The pilot was well received and now the program will be utilized by Pepco in other jurisdictions throughout the region.

Vegetation Management

(3E) Storm Preparation and Response

It is vitally important that local government and utilities work in concert in planning as well as response and recovery efforts before, during and after a storm. Although much of the focus has been focused on power distribution, local jurisdictions like Montgomery County, for example, have also been working with water and communication service providers to improve emergency coordination.

Pepco, one of the region's largest power utilities has taken steps in recent years to work closer with Montgomery County, Prince George's County and the District of Columbia. All jurisdictions participated in a power disruption exercise earlier this year and have an addition exercise planned for the beginning of the winter season. Previous exercises and events including the Derecho have resulted in corrective actions identified and remedied.

During the Derecho, Pepco provided jurisdictions with specific outage information on critical infrastructure and information on citizens with critical power needs. In Montgomery County, Pepco worked alongside county employees as part of strike teams to deal with live safety issues immediately after the storm. In total, 16 of these teams were in use during the Derecho. Pepco, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and the District of Columbia have agreed to a new process during major outages to share critical infrastructure status information and to discuss how resources are being deployed regionally.

Both local government and the electric utilities in particular have taken many steps towards integrating their planning and response operations but there is still much work to be done. As seen during the Derecho, there were still long waits for essential infrastructure to be restored; however, there is more communication and openness between all entities.
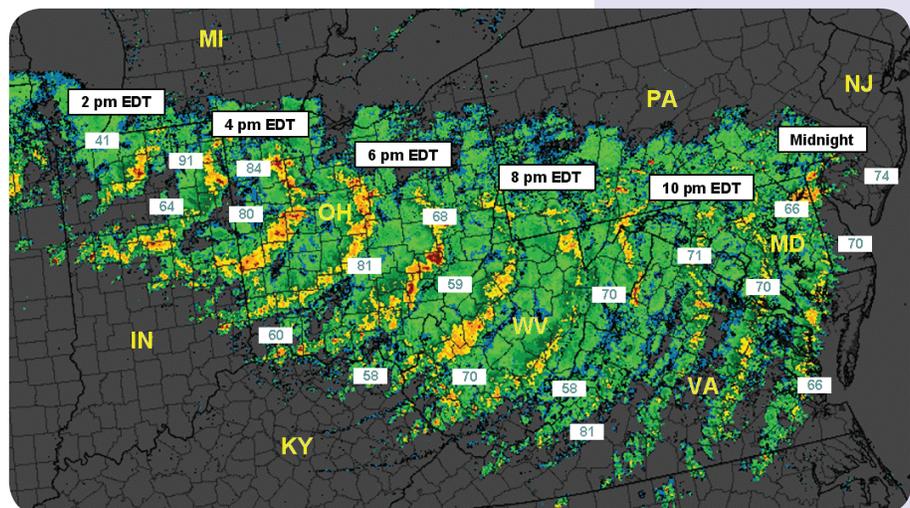
SUMMARY FROM 2011 IMR REPORT

ISSUE:
Utilities' preparations for storms occur outside of the regional coordination framework.

RECOMMENDATION:
Utilities and local governments should share storm preparedness assessments and develop more formal emergency coordination procedures.

June 29, 2012 Derecho Storm

(3E) Back-up Power for Critical Facilities, Traffic Signals

The 2011 IMR Report noted many critical facilities in the region, including most traffic signals, lacked backup power. Transportation officials, emergency managers, and critical infrastructure owners have efforts underway to address these issues.

Most electric utility outages in our region and elsewhere tend to be infrequent and of short duration. In the past decade, however, there have been a number of region-wide events that severely taxed existing emergency standby power systems or exposed significant system design flaws that led to catastrophic failure of a backup power system (e.g., 2012 Derecho storm). This recent disaster, in particular, was a prime example of how a small proportion of emergency power systems may fail when most needed.

Critical Facilities

The NCR Critical Infrastructure Protection Regional Programmatic Work Group (CIP RPWG) has identified the issue of ensuring backup power to critical facilities as a top priority.

For the past several years, the CIP RPWG and others have been working with the U.S. Army 249th Prime Power Battalion (Prime Power) to carry out backup power assessments at key facilities throughout the NCR.

- At least 150 NCR back-up power assessments have been carried out by Prime Power in the past.

- Data from these assessments were entered into ENGLink, which allows deployed personnel real-time access to critical information. The ENGLink system represents a single data entry point that standardizes and integrates methods of collecting, analyzing, forecasting, and presenting information for decision makers, speeding response times during an emergency.

- Additional NCR back-up power assessments are presently in the planning stages.

All water and wastewater facilities are required by regulation to have redundant electric power feeds, and many critical facilities have back-up power as well.

- Power reliability and use studies have also been completed or are presently underway for the largest water/wastewater utilities in the region (i.e., Fairfax Water, Washington Aqueduct, WSSC, and DC Water).

- Key recommendations from completed studies have been implemented to improve resiliency of critical infrastructure.

- Additional resiliency will be realized after ongoing studies are completed and implemented.

In addition to local electrical codes, numerous organizations are involved in setting standards and overseeing patient safety in health-care facilities. For example, the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), The Joint Commission (formerly known as JCAHO, The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) and the American Society of Healthcare Engineers (ASHE) all play a role. The Joint Commission recently issued recommendations intended to reduce emergency standby power system failures that go beyond the current NFPA testing requirements and electrical codes.

• In the NCR, back-up power assessments have been completed for all acute care hospitals.

• All facilities meet regulatory requirements and have adequate back-up power for things such as patients in operating rooms, obstetrical delivery rooms, nurseries and urgent care areas, life-support systems, medical air compressors and vacuum systems, etc.

• Some hospitals lack adequate back-up power for the HVAC system, which could require patient evacuations in extreme heat or cold.

• Federal Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding has been secured to upgrade the back-up power systems at four regional trauma centers (Washington Hospital Center, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Prince George's Hospital Center, and Laurel Regional Hospital) to make them "generator ready" in the event additional back-up power is needed to run the HVAC system during an emergency. Several other acute care hospitals either have adequate back-up power already or are in the process of system upgrades.

Research and experience indicate that a significant vulnerability exists in the NCR due to the interdependency between emergency shelters and their need for redundant and resilient power supplies.

• To address this preparedness gap and risk, UASI funding has been provided to carry-out a project to inventory shelters in the NCR and provide engineering designs to make as many of those shelters as possible "generator ready" and able to easily accept temporary electrical power.

• The target capability is to support all critical shelter functions during an emergency for a period of 96 hours without access to public utilities.

• It will likely take several years and a significant investment to meet this capability at all emergency shelters in the NCR.

• In addition to emergency shelters, IMR Committee members urged regional officials to also consider cooling centers, which are critical sites during the summer months.

'Federal UASI funding has been secured to upgrade the back-up power systems at four regional trauma centers (Washington Hospital Center, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Prince George's Hospital Center, and Laurel Regional Hospital) to make them "generator ready."

Traffic Signals

The regional Traffic Signals Subcommittee has been meeting on a bimonthly basis throughout 2012, with continuing discussions of signals power back-up issues. Awareness of the issue is high among member agencies.

COG transportation planning staff has conducted three surveys regarding traffic signal power issues.

• A survey of the numbers and types of traffic signal power back-up systems in the NCR as of December 31, 2011 was conducted and results reported to the IMR Steering Committee at the February meeting. Reported installation costs varied widely among agencies (approximately $5,000 to $25,000 per location) depending on the current situation to be upgraded, system capabilities, and other engineering factors.

• An update of the same survey to reflect deployment as of June 30, 2012 has been undertaken, with results currently under analysis. The general result of the June 30 survey is that there has been a notable increase in the number of power back-up systems installed in the region since the December 31, 2011 survey.

• Staff also has conducted a survey regarding impacts of and use of power back-up systems in the aftermath of the June 29, 2012 derecho storm, which also remains under analysis.

The Traffic Signal Subcommittee and COG staff have examined lists of Traffic Control Point (TCP) intersections in Maryland and Virginia emergency transportation/evacuation plans to determine coverage at those intersections. This has raised awareness of status as a TCP as a major consideration in where agencies deploy future signals power back-up systems. The District of Columbia undertook a similar effort in 2008, and had previously installed power back-ups at identified locations. The District effort is anticipated to be repeated after the completion of the District's Emergency Transportation Plan update in 2013.

In response to an inquiry at the May IMR Steering Committee meeting, staff has compiled a list of general traffic engineering criteria used by signal agencies regarding prioritization of placement of signal back-up systems, as compared to emergency planning criteria.

Regarding funding for expanding coverage, the subcommittee identified the issue of ongoing annual maintenance costs of power back-up systems as significant. Participants reported reluctance to install back-up systems unless funding for ongoing maintenance costs had also been identified and dedicated. Because of variations among types of signals equipment used in the region, differing previous levels of deployment, and differing mechanisms for ongoing maintenance funding, the Subcommittee did not view it to be advantageous to pursue a single region wide proposal for capital funding. However, the Subcommittee has agreed to coordinate regionally among individual agency deployments to help ensure that those deployments support regional emergency plans as feasible.

'The general result of the June 30, 2012 survey is that there has been a notable increase in the number of power back-up systems for traffic signals installed in the region since the December 31, 2011 survey.'

SECTION 4:
DECISION-MAKING

(4A) Emergency Response Network

There are still challenges to establishing legislative agreements amongst jurisdictions which exist in two different states and the District of Columbia. However, the immediate obstacles for the region do not require additional congressional or state authority to address.

The COG Attorneys Committee recommended building on the NCR Memorandum of Understanding and mutual aid agreements that have been in place as the best alternative. The NCR MOU is authorized by federal legislation unique to the NCR.

The Committee also advised that there is no bar to better coordination with utilities and other private entities which are not parties to the MOU in order to improve incident management response

Officials note recent examples of closer coordination between governments and utilities, such as the previously referenced coordination between Montgomery County and Pepco. In addition, after outages resulting from the June 29, 2012 Derecho storm, Verizon is working closely with 9-1-1 Directors serving on a special COG task force. A report on their work will be forthcoming.

**SUMMARY FROM
2011 IMR REPORT**

ISSUE:
Coordinating local decisions in a regional context is challenging in the multi-jurisdictional NCR.

RECOMMENDATION:
There are significant legal barriers to creating a central decision-making authority, and it is not clear that such an authority would achieve better results than a robust, well-coordinated multi-jurisdictional approach.

(4B) Decision-making Authority

The COG Attorneys Committee concurred with this recommendation and has not pursued creating a new decision-making model for the National Capital Region.

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Member, NCR Emergency Preparedness Council

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* Group represented is italicized.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COG	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
DCHSEMA	District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DOTs	Departments of Transportation
EMAs	Emergency Management Agencies
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EPC	National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IMR	Steering Committee on Incident Management and Response
MATOC	Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination Program
NCR	National Capital Region
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NPS	National Park Service
NWS	National Weather Service
OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
PIOs	Public Information Officers
RECP	Regional Emergency Coordination Plan
RESF	Regional Emergency Support Function
RIC	Regional Incident Coordination Program
RICCS	Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System
RITIS	Regional Integrated Transportation Information System
SPG	Senior Policy Group
TPB	National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
V-JIC	Virtual Joint Information Center