

National Capital Region - Emergency Preparedness Council

Work Program

I. BACKGROUND

The National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) is an advisory body that reports to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Board of Directors. It derives its authority from a Charter adopted by the COG Board on November 13, 2002. The EPC makes policy recommendations to the COG Board and makes procedural or other recommendations directly or through the COG Board to various regional agencies with emergency preparedness responsibilities or operational response authority.

After the creation of the US Department of Homeland Security-sponsored Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), the EPC later voted to act as the region's UASI-required Urban Area Work Group (UAWG). In this capacity, EPC added federally sponsored coordinating actions to its already existing regional efforts, and continues to function as the region's central coordinating body on emergency preparedness.

The EPC works in conjunction with the Gubernatorially-created Senior Policy Group, the Chief Administrative Officers, and the US Department of Homeland Security's Office of National Capital Region Coordination (ONCRC) in the enhancement of regional preparedness activities and acquisitions. It manages the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP), helps to coordinate activities of various support function working groups, and assists in the development and conduct of preparedness training and exercises.

II. MEMBERSHIP

The EPC is made up of elected officials, COG committee chairs, and representatives of homeland security, emergency management services, and transportation, along with the nonprofit and business communities.

The EPC is composed of:

- Nine elected officials representing COG member jurisdictions, two each from the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
- The Chairs of the COG professional and technical committees of chief administrative officers, police chiefs, fire chiefs, public health officers, emergency management administrators, attorneys, and other internal COG committees determined to have subject matter jurisdiction over significant aspects of disaster preparation and response;

- The directors of emergency management of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
- Representatives of the Departments of Transportation of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
- The chairs or other designees of the Homeland Security Councils of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia;
- The COG Executive Director; and Representatives of such institutions and agencies of the Federal government and organizations representing the private, quasi-public, and non-profit sectors as may be jointly designated by the Council Chair and the COG Board Chair, and invited to participate, such designations to include the Office of Homeland Security, the Office of Personnel Management, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the General Services Administration, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, the Washington Area School Study Council, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, the American Red Cross of the National Capital Region, and the Non-Profit Roundtable of Greater Washington.

III. PRIORITIES: TASKS FOR 2005

The tasks delineated below represent the EPC's priorities for 2005, and provide a strategic framework for the EPC's activities for the following year and beyond. These tasks will comprise the EPC's work program for 2005.

TASK 1: Citizen's Education Public Information Campaign

Background:

Generating and disseminating clear region-wide emergency preparedness messages to the public has been identified as a priority by the EPC. The theme *Common Message, Many Voices*, developed by the region's public information officers, is the under-girding principle for this campaign. Also key to the EPC's mission is its role as an advocate for the region's accomplishments in coordinating preparedness efforts.

Activity:

The EPC will, in part, function as a central voice for regional preparedness activities and related legislative outreach and public information. The EPC will also work with a public relations contractor to develop a citizens' education campaign aimed at providing the region's residents with information necessary to prepare for terrorist-related or other major disruptive or emergency events.

Key Product(s):

A region-wide emergency preparedness public information campaign including marketing materials and advertisements
Public policy outreach and advocacy

TASK 2: Regional Emergency Coordination Plan & RICCS

Background:

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, COG convened the National Capital Region Task Force on Homeland Security, the predecessor to the EPC, to develop a region-wide plan to coordinate emergency response and preparation efforts. The resulting publication, the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP), provides a framework for these activities. As a real time companion to this effort, the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS) was developed as a means to bring key stakeholders and critical decision makers together at a moment's notice to address emergency situations.

Activity:

The EPC will provide oversight relative to RECP Annexes/Updates and continue its oversight of the RICCS emergency notification system.

Key Product(s):

Annexes and updates to the RECP: Water Security, Transportation
Text-to-voice solution for the RICCS system

TASK 3: Regional Preparedness Assessment and Accreditation

Background:

The EPC has identified a need to measure and enhance regional prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation capabilities in the metropolitan Washington area. To maximize the impact of current and future funding, personnel, and other resources, the EPC sought a mechanism to measure the status of current capabilities in the NCR against an established standard, identify and prioritize future improvement activities, and provide a strategic framework for resource allocation. The EPC has endorsed the initiation of an EMAP assessment with the intent of addressing gaps identified during the process. EMAP is an independent non-profit organization that conducts assessments based on national standards in state and local jurisdictions throughout the country.

Activity:

The EPC will provide oversight for this project to: provide the region with a comprehensive assessment against national standards; strengthen areas needing improvement that can be addressed in the short term; and identify and offer direction for longer-term steps to build more robust regional disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.

Key Product(s):

Regional preparedness assessment

TASK 4: Urban Area Security Initiative – Urban Area Work Group

Background:

The National Capital Region has been identified as one of the regions across the nation slated to receive funding for planning, training, exercises, and equipment under the Urban Area Security Initiative, as established under Homeland Security Presidential Directives 5 and 8. Working in conjunction with the Senior Policy Group, the Chief Administrative Officers, and the Office of National Capital Region Coordination, the EPC, in part, functions as the federally required Urban Area Working Group, with oversight responsibility for the UASI process and regional preparedness.

Activity:

The EPC will continue to work closely with the Senior Policy Group, the Chief Administrative Officers, and the Office of National Capital Region Coordination to administer these preparedness activities, while strengthening the process to enhance regional coordination.

Key Product(s):

Continued federal funding for regional homeland security initiatives

TASK 5: Private Sector and Community Engagement

Background:

The private sector, from the business community to nonprofits, is a key stakeholder in regional preparedness. Recognizing this important factor, the EPC has included in its membership representatives from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Non-Profit Roundtable of Greater Washington from its inception. Crucial assets and services owned and managed by private sector organizations form part of the core capacity that first responders rely on in emergency situations.

Activity:

The EPC will continue to work with the private sector during 2005, with key emphasis placed on the development of an inventory of private sector assets that could become available for use region-wide in the event of an emergency.

Key Product(s):

Private sector asset inventory

TASK 6: National Capital Region Strategic Plan

Background:

The Office of National Capital Region Coordination (ONCRC) is responsible for coordinating federal emergency preparedness efforts in the Washington metropolitan region. This office has recently embarked on the process of creating a strategic plan for emergency preparedness in the region.

Activity:

The EPC will work with ONCRC throughout the process to assist in the development of a federally supported regional strategic plan, using guidelines set forth in Homeland Security Presidential Directives 5 & 8.

Key Product(s):

ONCRC-sponsored strategic plan