

National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council

Work Program for Calendar Year 2008

I. BACKGROUND

The National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) is an advisory body established by 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 Emergency Preparedness Council (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 will continue to work in conjunction with the Senior Policy Group, the Chief Administrative Officers, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of National Capital Region Coordination (ONCRC), and others in the enhancement of regional preparedness activities and acquisitions. It serves as the custodian of the National Capital Region Homeland Security Strategic Plan, manages the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP), and 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 the most broadly defined advisory body in the National Capital Region focused on emergency planning, preparedness, response and recovery and is an excellent forum for information exchange, advocacy and policy guidance to public and private sector stakeholders and first-responder agencies.

The EPC is currently comprised of:

- Nine elected officials representing COG member jurisdictions, at least 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 Committee, Regional Emergency Support Functions and Regional Program Working Groups to include 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, Maryland, and 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 National Capital Region Coordination, the Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region, 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, the Non-Profit Roundtable of Greater Washington, and others.

III. PRIORITIES FOR 2008

The priorities delineated below represent the EPC’s focus for 2008, and provide a strategic framework for the EPC’s activities.

PRIORITY 1: National Capital Region Strategic Plan for Preparedness

Background:

The Office of National Capital Region Coordination (ONCRC) continues to be responsible for coordinating federal emergency preparedness efforts in the Washington metropolitan region. ONCRC supported, with broad stakeholder input, the development of the first comprehensive National Capital Region Homeland Security Strategic Plan that was approved by the EPC on September 13, 2006. The EPC will support ONCRC and the Senior Policy Group by continuing to serve as the “custodian” of the Strategic Plan going forward, advising key stakeholders concerning implementation progress and any recommended future updates. Subsequent to the National Capital Region (NCR) developing the Strategic Plan, the Department of Homeland Security developed 37 Target Capabilities that were published in September 2007 and can be a basis for an update of the Strategic Plan.

Activity:

1. The EPC, as the custodian of the region’s Strategic Plan for preparedness, will continue to guide, review, and oversee the process for completing the 30 Initiatives in the plan. The Grants Management Office, DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency will continue to provide the EPC with quarterly updates on the status of completion of the 30 Initiatives.
2. The Senior Policy Group (SPG) and Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) are requested to work in coordination with COG Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs), Regional Program Working Groups (RPWGs), and others responsible for the 37 Target Capabilities in the region to determine the needed capability in each area, the existing NCR capability in each area, and enhancements needed in each area to improve capabilities in the NCR.

3. The SPG and CAOs are requested to provide quarterly updates and to submit a draft updated Strategic Plan that includes enhancements (if any) identified for each of the 37 Target Capabilities at the last EPC meeting in 2008. It is anticipated that comments on the draft will be due in 30 days after receipt and that the plan will be approved by the EPC in early 2009.

PRIORITY 2: Update of Local Plans and the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan

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), provided a framework for these activities, and the EPC serves as the “custodian” of this plan. At its September 2005 meeting the COG Board directed staff and the CAOs Committee to develop a work scope, milestones and timetable to re-examine the RECP and other relevant area plans and to incorporate items from the new National Response Plan (Now Draft National Response Framework), the National Incident Management System, and other appropriate US Department of Homeland Security documents as well as lessons learned from the experiences of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the EMAP Assessment, and the National Plan Review. Unfortunately, funding was not available in FY06. In FY07 the SPG and CAOs approved UASI funds to update local emergency operations plans and the RECP.

Activities:

1. The EPC will request the SPG and the CAOs (may be delegated to the Emergency Managers Committee) present their plan for using the previously completed Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, other documents noted above, and the UASI funds allocated to the Planning Project to complete and update of local emergency operations plans and the RECP at the February 13, 2008 EPC meeting. The briefing should include but not be limited to responsibility, time line, and final deliverables. Subsequently, the SPG and CAOs (may be delegated to the Emergency Managers Committee) will be requested to provide quarterly in progress reviews of the Planning Project to include a review of what has been completed to date against the time line and what is planned for the next quarter until the project is completed and on guidance needed from the EPC.
2. The EPC will also provide guidance and advocacy for additional training and preparedness exercises – and related resources - in order to test existing and soon to be updated and augmented emergency plans. ETOP will be requested to provide the EPC with a briefing on regional training and exercise activities at least every six months.
3. As a real time companion to the RECP, 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. The EPC requests COG initiate a review of RICCS to insure that it is keeping pace with emerging technologies and to identify any enhancements needed in protocols and procedures. Further, COG is requested to provide any recommended enhancements by September 30, 2008. The EPC will continue to provide guidance for the management and expanded use of RICCS.

Note: Priority 2 was a carryover from 2006 because of the limited UASI funding received to support this activity. This item was included in a request for planning that was approved by the SPG and CAOs in the amount of \$7M from FY07 UASI funding. The EPC will work with the CAO/SPG to update emergency Operations plans in the National Capital Region and the RECP. This effort is being led by the Emergency Managers Committee under the supervision of the CAOs and SPG. They will be requested to brief the EPC on their plans for updated local plans to include the RECP.

PRIORITY 3: Senior Leader Seminar 2008

Background:

The EPC, in coordination with the SPG and CAO's, will request the Exercise and Training Operations Panel (ETOP) develop Senior Leader Seminar 2008 to demonstrate the role of the Private Sector and Media in preparing for, response to, and recovering from a worst case disaster impacting the NCR. The disaster scenario should have a significant impact on jurisdictions in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The purpose of the Senior Leader Seminar is to continue to educate members of the EPC on situational awareness and the status of preparedness in the region and the ability to respond to and recover from a major disaster. Special emphasis should be placed on exploring opportunities as to how the Private Sector can assist or enhance the regions ability to develop and promote a common message and communicate with the public and media in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster using a consistent message.

Activities:

1. The EPC will provide guidance to ETOP to plan, conduct and evaluate the results of Senior Leaders Seminar 2008, tentatively scheduled for July 2008. The specific date and location are to be determined by the ETOP planning subcommittee in coordination with the EPC.
2. Senior Leader Seminar 2008 should further develop and clarify the Private Sector role and be interactive and emphasize high level, major decisions that regional elected and appointed officials may need to make subsequent to a major disaster. This should include necessary coordination with the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
3. Senior Leader Seminar 2008 should highlight the role of the private sector and demonstrate how the region develops a common message and communicates with the public and media in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster using a consistent message. The focus will be on the coordination in place to insure one message many voices.
4. The NCR has been provided more than \$300M in UASI funds in recent years and it would be beneficial for Senior Leader Seminar 2008 to demonstrate how the resources procured with these funds to include Web EOC have improved the ability of the region to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a major disaster.
5. An After Action Report/Corrective Action Plan will be prepared subsequent to the Senior Leader Seminar 2008 that will highlight lessons learned and recommendations to correct any

shortcomings. The EPC will be briefed quarterly on any and all shortcomings until they are corrected.

PRIORITY 4: Citizen Engagement on Preparedness

Background:

Generating and disseminating clear region-wide emergency preparedness messages to the public have 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. Further, the private sector, from the business community to non-profits, is a key stakeholder in regional preparedness. 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.

Activities:

For FY 2008, the EPC will direct R-ESF 15 external affairs to continue its focus on citizen outreach and extending the Outreach Plan developed in 2005. In addition, the committee will be asked to continue pursuing plans to incorporate preparedness messages in local jurisdictions' Alert Notification systems, and to market the Alert Notification systems as part of the "Be Ready Make a Plan" campaign. The EPC has directed the committee to continue its discussions with journalists and media executives on specific processes for sharing information during emergencies. The EPC also will direct R-ESF 15 external affairs to continue its work to maintain the Outreach campaign's web site, www.makeaplan.org, through 2012 and to continue developing a Web portal through which its members can share information with each other and the public.

PRIORITY 5: Urban Area Work Group and Regional Coordination

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 that functions as the federally required Urban Area Working Group, with oversight responsibility for the UASI process and regional preparedness as it relates to interaction with federal efforts.

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 oversee preparedness activities, while strengthening the process to enhance regional coordination by advocating for additional UASI and other federal, state and local resources for the National Capital Region.

The EPC will also work with ONCRC, the JFHQ-NCR, the National Capital Region's congressional delegation and senior representatives of other federal agencies to improve federal-regional coordination during emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

IV. SCHEDULE

The EPC will plan to hold five full meetings and an another EOPC Senior Leader Seminar in 2008, approximately bimonthly, with ad hoc work sessions, as necessary. For example, meetings to finalize plans for the Senior Leader Seminar II and the update of the RECP may be conducted as work sessions, to be scheduled by the chair and executive committee. To promote stronger participation by public officials, EPC bimonthly meetings will follow the COG Board of Directors meeting on the second Wednesday from 2:15 to 4:15 p.m.:

- February 13
- April 9
- June 11
- TBD Senior Leader Seminar II (Possibly July)
- September 10
- November 12

V. LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP FOR 2008

Consistent with the EPC bylaws, Gerald Connolly, Chair, Board of Supervisors, Fairfax County was reappointed to chair the EPC in 2008 by action of the COG Board of Directors on January 9, 2008. The EPC continues to review and modify its membership and leadership governance structure as necessary to enable it to fulfill its expanded mission and goals. EPC leadership by local elected officials remains a priority for the EPC. The EPC and Executive Committee governance structure provides for continuity of leadership and expanded opportunities for Executive Committee participation.

The EPC Executive Committee will meet by conference call approximately one week prior to EPC meetings to review the agenda and provide any recommended enhancements. Also, the EPC Executive Committee will provide guidance to ETOP in the development and conduct of the EPC Senior Leader Seminar 2008 and to the SPG and CAO's (may be delegated to the Emergency Managers Committee) on the update of local emergency operations plans and the Regional emergency Coordination Plan (RECP). Finally, the EPC Executive Committee will meet to consider other matters such as the Review of the UASI Governance Structure in the NCR as determined by the Chair.