

Date: May 4, 2005

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Re: Preparedness Definition for National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Campaign

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The National Capital Region (NCR) Emergency Preparedness Campaign will be judged by its ability to motivate 50 percent of area residents to become prepared for a terrorist attack or other emergency situation. In this memo, we outline our definition of preparedness as required by the initial RFP. A baseline measurement of preparedness utilizing this definition will be established in the NCR regional poll scheduled to field May 15.

Our preliminary research in the National Capital Region with both preparedness experts and the general public suggests preparedness is best understood as individuals taking basic actions to ready themselves for a terrorist attack or natural disaster. Our definition of preparedness segments the public into two camps: unprepared and prepared. Given the variety of actions that can be taken to be “prepared,” individuals who fall into the prepared category will be divided into three sub-categories: Prepared, Prepared Plus and Advanced Prepared. Dividing the public into these distinct categories will accomplish the following goals:

- Establish a baseline measurement of preparedness in the National Capitol Region against which the Emergency Preparedness Campaign can measure its success. The primary objective is to have at least 50 percent of the public in the “prepared” category after the completion of the public awareness campaign.
- Measure different levels of preparedness and better understand how willing the public is to take advanced preparedness actions and what it will take to motivate them to do so.

To create the scale, survey respondents will be asked if they have a plan as to how they would deal with a terrorist attack. If the respondent indicates that they have a plan, they will be asked a number of questions to better understand exactly what their plan entails.

If they do not have a plan, respondents will be asked a similar battery of questions to see if they have undertaken any preparedness actions, even though they do not categorize such actions as a preparedness “plan.”

In both cases, respondents will be given points for having taken any preparedness action. Certain actions will count more heavily toward being prepared than other actions. Each respondent will be asked if they have any of the following:<sup>1</sup>

<b>Preparedness Action Taken</b>	<b>Score</b>
A three day emergency supply of water (gallon per person per day)	20
A three day emergency supply of food	15
A communications plan	15
A battery operated radio	15
Know where to go to get information	10
A planned alternate route home	10
A planned evacuation route from home	10
A first aid kit in your home	5
Visited a web site or read a brochure on how to be prepared	5
A working flashlight in your home	5
Extra batteries for your radio and flashlight	5
(*Respondents with children) Familiar with school emergency plan	10
(*Respondents who take prescription drugs) An extra supply of prescription drugs	10

Each respondent will be allocated to a preparedness category based on the sum score of the actions they have taken. To be considered “prepared”, the sum of the preparedness scores related to the action items taken must be 50 or greater. **If a respondent scores less than 50, he or she would be considered “unprepared.”**

We will further subdivide the “prepared” category into three segments:

- 1) PREPARED = sum score of 50 TO 70
- 2) PREPARED PLUS = sum score of 71 TO 84
- 3) ADVANCED PREPARED = sum score above 85

The following examples will help clarify the definition:

- A respondent who has three days supply of food, three days supply of water, a battery operated radio and knowledge of where to find information during an emergency would be categorized as “Prepared” (15+20+15+10=60).

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<sup>1</sup> The exact wording of the questions to be used in the survey is still being tested.

- A respondent who has three days supply of water, three days of food and a working flashlight but has taken no other action items would be categorized as “Unprepared” (20+15+5=40).

Individuals with school age children or those who take prescription drugs will have a slightly higher threshold of preparedness as the burdens on them will be somewhat higher. They will be asked the additional questions noted above and will need a base score of at least 60 to be considered “prepared.”

In addition, after individuals have been asked which preparedness actions they have taken, they will be given a chance to describe in their own words any additional actions they may have taken that are relevant to their own circumstance. For example, a plan for people with disabilities or for individuals caring for an elderly parent. If the respondent indicates they have taken a reasonable preparedness action, they would receive an additional 10 points.

It is our intention to conduct a pre-test of the draft questionnaire next week to ensure that this definition of preparedness works and is applicable to the assumptions of the emergency preparedness campaign.

We appreciate that there will always be additional actions that individuals can take to better prepare themselves, but it is virtually impossible to itemize these actions given the wide variety of ills that may befall the region. The focus groups suggest that more advanced preparedness actions – for example, knowledge of “shelter-in-place” or ownership of a gas mask – are limited to individuals who are already well prepared should a disaster occur. Time and resource limitations restrict the number of items we can test in the poll (or administer in the campaign). The definition we plan to utilize is serious, measurable, actionable and effective. It will help improve the safety and survival of the general public in the event of another terrorist attack or natural disaster. In addition, the scale will lend itself well to other aspects of the campaign, such as a “self-test” on the website and other public communication materials.