

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Strengthening Preparedness and Response Capabilities
in the National Capital Region

Status Report
March 8, 2006

Purpose

At the request of the Board of Directors, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) proposes to support member jurisdictions regarding mutual aid in the region to assure local government capabilities in readiness and response plans that are regionally coordinated and include partnerships with state and federal agencies and the private sector/non government organizations. The Washington region has a long history of regional cooperation in emergency planning, preparedness and response that is invested in local government preparedness capacity. This was demonstrated in effective, coordinated responses to incidents such as train derailments, hazardous material spills on highways, the September 11 attack on the Pentagon, release of anthrax spores at various locations, sniper attacks and Hurricane Isabel.

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the challenges in the Gulf Coast Region have raised concerns about local governments becoming overwhelmed during catastrophic emergencies. There is a need for local government response to be more coordinated and integrated with state and federal resources and to assure that these resources arrive in a timely manner to meet needs of the local government and residents/visitors impacted by the event. While mutual aid among the jurisdictions in the region will flow seamlessly across state and local jurisdictional boundaries, there is also a need to evaluate how resources of the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia will be applied to the region and how the flow of federal resources will be managed or directed through all or one of the three states for the National Capital Region.

COG and its member jurisdictions continue to participate in the National Capital Region (NCR) planning process for the Strategic Plan for funding under the federal Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI). This NCR strategic planning process is on-going and relates to enhancing and developing the capabilities and capacity of local jurisdictions, non-government organization partners and residents of the region to protect, prevent, respond to and recover from man-made or natural events that impact the region.

Guiding Principles

1. Strengthen regional coordination among all partners to gain synergy while sustaining jurisdictional authority and enhancing capabilities.
2. Implement homeland security policies and programs while maintaining our constitutionally-based society, particularly the civil rights and civil liberties of the region's diverse population, including persons with disabilities.
3. Prepare for "all-hazards", including man-made and naturally occurring emergencies and disasters.

4. Advance the safety and security of the region in ways that are enduring, relevant, and sustainable.
5. Foster a culture of collaboration, respect, communication, innovation, and mutual aid among all homeland security partners across the region.
6. Adopt best-practice, performance-based approaches to staffing, planning, equipping, training, and exercising for all homeland security partners.
7. Strive for an optimal balance of preparedness capabilities across the region that recognizes differing risks and circumstances, and leverages mutual aid agreements.

Work Program Activities

Section A - Short Term (30 – 120 days)

Task 1: Identify improvements in emergency preparedness since 9/11 and initiate a review of existing jurisdictional Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) to include School Plans and Evacuation Plans to determine where their plans rely upon state and federal resources and to determine if there are regional opportunities for providing such resources if neither state or federal resources are available in a timely manner by March 31, 2006.

Status

- Presented the proposed Emergency Preparedness work program to Emergency Managers Committee on December 1, 2005.
- Arlington, Montgomery, and Prince Georges County have completed a review of their Emergency Operations Plans to include Evacuation Plans. Other jurisdictions are in the process of completing their plan reviews.
- School security officers reported on November 15, 2005 that they have Schools Plans in place in accordance with State/Commonwealth/District Departments of Education.
- COG staff is working with appropriate committees to update Mutual Aid Agreements so they will be consistent with Congressional legislation that was approved in January 2005.
- Also, see item 2 below for requesting disaster assistance beyond what is available locally.

Next Steps

- COG staff will request that local jurisdictions who have not completed the review of their Emergency Operations Plans and Evacuation Plans to report completion.

Task 2: Initiate and facilitate appropriate forums with federal, state, and local organizations in the NCR to discuss the appropriate means to obtain state and federal resources in a timely way for local jurisdictions if all regional and mutual aid resources are exhausted. Review procedures regarding the manner in which the three states will coordinate the provision of state resources to any NCR local jurisdiction as well as the procedure for one or all three states to request and receive EMAC and/or federal resources in a timely manner.

Status

- COG's CAO Committee met with MG Swann, Commander of the National Capitol Region Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) and members of his staff to confirm that Military Installations in the NCR are authorized to provide immediate response to the surrounding civilian communities in life and death situations.

- It was also confirmed that, once life and death situations are taken care of, requests for military assistance need to go from the local jurisdiction to the State/Commonwealth/District (National Guard may be used) to FEMA to Department of Defense; approved requests are forwarded to Northern Command; and forces are provided to JFHQ to complete the mission.
- Further, it was determined that any other disaster assistance needs that local jurisdictions have should be submitted to the State/Commonwealth/District and if they can not meet the need the request may be forwarded to FEMA for federal assistance.

Next Steps

- COG staff will work with the State/Commonwealth/District to confirm that they are in agreement with the information noted above.
- Report back to the Emergency Managers Committee on the processes and procedures that are currently in place for disaster assistance.

Task 3: Identify individuals to serve on a New R-ESF#14 (Long-Term Recovery and Mitigation) and obtain the services of a consultant to begin developing this New R-ESF#14.

Status

- The Emergency Managers Committee has been requested to nominate individuals to serve on the new R-ESF#14.
- The Emergency Managers Committee wants the committee split into one element to handle critical infrastructure and mitigation and a second element to address economic recovery (COOP, business relocation, etc).
- The Emergency Managers Committee indicated that Seattle, City of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County have good long-term mitigation and recovery plans that can be used as a reference.
- Northern Virginia has developed a Mitigation Plan that is pending approval at FEMA that could be of assistance.

Next Steps

- COG has hired staff to develop Long-Term Recovery and Mitigation (R-ESF#14).
- Follow-up with the Emergency Managers Committee on recommended names for the new R-ESF#14.
- Contact Seattle, City of Los Angeles, and the County of Los Angeles to obtain copies of their long term recovery and mitigation plans.

Task 4: Support completion of EMAP assessment of the NCR to determine if the region meets the EMAP Standards (Region appropriate) that are based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1600 by March 31, 2006.

Status

- The EMAP process is in the final stages with twelve jurisdictions completing the assessment and regional review. EMAP will fully brief the CAO's Homeland Security Executive Committee, Senior Policy Group, and Emergency Managers Committee on Wednesday April 5, 2006. The briefing will identify the gaps in the region's overall preparedness and provide recommendations to the committees to resolve their findings.

Next Steps

- Local jurisdictions will need to develop individual action plans to address shortcomings found in local assessments.
- Emergency Managers Committee will need to develop action plan to address shortcomings found in the regional assessment.

Task 5: Support the Exercise and Training Oversight Panel (ETOP) in completing a Training Gap Analysis for the National Capital Region by May 31.

Status

- John Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHUAPL) has been awarded a contract to complete a Training Gap Analysis for the NCR.
- COG staff will provide support as necessary to assist the contractor in working with R-ESFs/Committees in the NCR.

Next Steps

- Review the report when it is provided to COG and other members of the NCR community.
- Support the SAA and ETOP in developing an action plan to address shortcomings when the report from the Training Gap Analysis is received.

Task 6: Initiate an update the RECP to reflect the changes in the New National Response Plan, the National Incident Management System, and other ODP documents by March 31, 2006.

Status

- With R-ESF 5 taking the lead, the Emergency Managers Committee requested that COG update the RECP and issue an RFP to engage a consultant. The selected contractor will also be requested to assist COG, the Chief Administrative Officer's Committee, and the Emergency Managers Committee in developing a template for a local Emergency Operations Plan that will meet all EMAP requirements, and provide consistency with the RECP, and be in compliance with state and federal guidelines.
- Proposed elements include: Review current Emergency Operations Plans for background information; Coordinate with the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) and identify all items required in a local Emergency Operations Plan for compliance with the standard; Coordinate with states in the NCR and federal authorities to identify all requirements for local Emergency Operations Plans; and Insure that the Emergency Operations Plan template is consistent with the revised RECP. Note: Local jurisdictions should be able to take the Emergency Operations Plan template and modify it for their local jurisdiction with minimal effort. The template should be a user friendly, electronic tool that is readily adoptable to WebEOC.

Next Steps

- The Emergency Managers Committee has submitted a Concept Paper/Initiative Plan to obtain FY06 UASI funding to update of the RECP and to develop the requested Emergency Operations Plan template for local jurisdictions.

- COG has already drafted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for this initiative that will be issued once funding is received.
- This is a long term project and periodic updates will be provided to the COG Board.

Section B - Mid Term (3-8 months)

Task 1: Work with R-ESFs/Committees and in partnership with local jurisdictions, states, and others to review and update the RECP to reflect the changes required as determined above to obtain timely state and federal resources for NCR jurisdictions by June 30, 2006.

Status

- The Emergency Managers Committee has submitted a Concept Paper/Initiative Plan requesting FY06 UASI funds to update the RECP and develop an Emergency Operation Plan template for local jurisdictions.

Task 2: Incorporate results from the “Proposed National Process Review of Emergency Plans” in the update of the RECP for review by the CAO Committee and the COG Board of Directors by June 30, 2006.

Status

- This item will be completed as part of the update of the RECP. Please see item 1 above.

Task 3: Upon direction from the CAO’s and the COG Board, coordinate with the Regional Exercise and Training Oversight Panel (ETOP) to commence planning for a NCR Table Top Exercise in 2006 involving local jurisdictions as the focal point for NIMS response, mitigation and recovery to test the procedures identified above for use of all available regional and mutual aid assistance, to determine the duration and capacity of such resources, and to obtain federal and state assistance as required at the time needed.

Status

- COG has been in contact with ETOP and they are preparing a blanket Request for Proposal (RFP) that can be used to assist in the development and conduct of exercises for the NCR.

Task 4: Develop a Work Plan to address EMAP Standards (Region appropriate) that the region did not meet during the assessment by June 30, 2006.

Status

- Local jurisdictions will be requested to develop action plans to address shortcomings in the local EMAP assessments and the Emergency Managers Committee will be requested to develop an action plan to address shortcomings in the Regional EMAP Assessment.

Task 5: Support the Exercise and Training Oversight Panel (ETOP) in making significant progress in addressing shortcomings identified in the Training Gap Analysis by June 30, 2006.

Status

- It is estimated that the Training Gap Analysis will be completed by John Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory on or about May 2006.

Task 6: Under direction of the COG Board, re-examine the purpose, structure, and intended outcomes of the National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council as it relates to efforts undertaken by the CAO Committee, the Senior Policy Group, and other COG committees, and in support of the NCR Strategic Plan for emergency preparedness and homeland security and the EPC's functions as part of the Urban Area Work Group by June 30, 2006.

Status

- The EPC Executive Committee met to define the mission, leadership, roles and responsibilities of the committee.
- The Executive Committee developed a draft meeting schedule, work plan and priorities for 2006.

Next Steps

- Present the Draft 2006 EPC Work Program to the committee of the whole on Wednesday February 8th for review, discussion and coordination of activities.

Section C - Long Term (6 months – 14 months)

Task 1: Complete the update of the RECP to include development of a New R-ESF#14 to insure that the document is consistent with the New National Response Plan, National Incident Management System, and other ODP documents by September 30, 2006.

Status

- The Emergency Managers Committee has submitted a Concept Paper/Initiative Plan for FY06 UASI funding to update the RECP and develop an Emergency Operations Plan Template for local jurisdictions.

Task 2: Provide training on policies and procedures found in revised/updated RECP by September 30, 2006.

Status

Training on policies and procedures found in the revised RECP is included in the Request for Proposal (RFP) that has been developed by COG staff.

Task 3: Complete the design and development of the NCR Table Top Exercise by September 30, 2006.

Status

- ETOP has been requested to develop and conduct the requested exercise and they are in the process of developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain the services of a consultant.

Task 4: Conduct the NCR Table Top Exercise, including local, state, federal, and private/volunteer partners by December 31, 2006.

Status

- ETOP has been requested to develop and conduct the requested exercise and they are in the process of developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain the services of a consultant.

Task 5: Revise and update RECP and training on the plan subsequent to the NCR Table Top Exercise.

Status

- Update and training on the updated RECP subsequent to the NCR Table Top Exercise is included in Request for Proposal (RFP) developed by COG.

Task 6: Achieve significant progress in correcting shortcomings identified in the Regional EMAP Assessment Work Plan by December 31, 2006.

Status

- Subsequent to the briefing on the local and Regional EMAP assessments on April 5, 2006, local jurisdictions will be requested to develop action plans to address their shortcomings and the Emergency Managers Committee will be requested to develop an action plan to address the shortcomings in the Regional EMAP.