

National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council

Work Program for Calendar Year 2010

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 2010

The priorities delineated below represent the EPC's focus for 2010, and provide a strategic framework for the EPC's activities.

PRIORITY 1: National Capital Region Strategic Plan for Preparedness

Background:

The EPC approved the National Capital Region Homeland Security Strategic Plan on September 13, 2006 and since that time the Chief Administrative Officers, the Senior Policy Group, and many others have been working to address the 30 Initiatives in the Strategic Plan. In early 2009, the SPG and CAO HSEC identified funding as requested by the EPC to update the NCR Homeland Security Strategic Plan and commenced a review and update of the Strategic Plan. A contract was awarded to the University of Maryland to support the SPG and CAO HSEC in updating of the Strategic Plan and that update is currently in progress. The EPC continues to serve as the "custodian" of the Strategic Plan and to support the SPG and CAO-HSEC in informing key stakeholders on the status of implementing initiatives in the Strategic Plan.

Activities:

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 initiatives in the Strategic Plan.
2. The SPG and CAO-HSEC will continue to provide periodic updates on the completion of the 30 Initiatives in the current Strategic Plan using the Dashboard. It is requested that at least one update of the Strategic Plan Dashboard be provided in 2010.
3. The EPC requests the CAO-HSEC and SPG provide leadership for the Strategic Plan update, including providing quarterly reports to the EPC on the Strategic Plan update until its completion in 2010..

4. The EPC has directed that the updated Strategic Plan reflect the Region's updated priorities. The SPG and CAO-HSEC have further directed that the draft update to the Strategic Plan reflect the gaps in the National Capital Region as identified in the Region's FY 2010 UASI priority-setting process. The draft update to the Strategic Plan will be capabilities based.
5. The draft update to the Strategic Plan will be reviewed and vetted by the Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs), Regional Program Working Groups (RPWGs), SPG, CAO-HSEC, and EPC.

PRIORITY 2: Update of Local Emergency Operations Plans and the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP)

Background:

During the FY06 UASI process the Emergency Managers Committee identified the need for funding to update local emergency operations plans to include the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP). In FY07 the CAO HSEC and the SPG made approximately \$7M UASI funding available to the Emergency Managers Committee to develop and update emergency plans. In FY09 they made approximately \$5.6M in additional UASI funding available to continue those planning activities. The Emergency Managers Committee made major progress in updating local emergency operation plans. The 2009 EPC SLS validated the principles and concepts in the RECP. At the same time, it noted that the RECP is outdated and does not adequately address communications and coordination challenges regionally.

Activities:

1. The EPC will request the SPG and the CAOs (may be delegated to the Emergency Managers Committee) to provide quarterly in progress reviews of the Planning Project a review of what has been completed to date against the timeline, what is planned for the next quarter, and the timeline for completing the remaining tasks.
2. The EPC, in coordination with the SPG and CAO's, will request the Emergency Managers Committee to utilize available planning funds or other funds to obtain the services of a consultant to update and revise the RECP to address the observations noted during the 2009 EPC SLS. It is requested that local planners provide support to the consultant with this initiative; that the RECP be updated by May 31, 2010; and that the updated RECP be tested during the 2010 EPC SLS.
3. 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 local emergency operation plans. ETOP will be requested to provide the EPC with a briefing on regional training and exercise activities at least every six months.
4. 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 in the NCR. The EPC requests COG continue to work with partners in the NCR to insure RICCS is available 24/7. Further, COG is requested to periodically test RICCS, review RICCS activations, and address any reported concerns. The EPC will continue to provide guidance as appropriate for the management RICCS.

PRIORITY 3: Senior Leader Seminar 2010

Background:

The EPC, in coordination with the SPG and CAOs, will request that the Exercise and Training Operations Panel (ETOP) develop Senior Leader Seminar 2010 to demonstrate the role of local jurisdictions, states, and the federal government in coordination with the private sector and nonprofit organizations in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a worst case disaster scenario impacting the NCR. The actual scenario will be determined based on the NCR Training and Exercise Plan 2009-2012 completed in June 2009. 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 and other senior leaders in the NCR on situational awareness; 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 region's 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 2010, tentatively scheduled for October 2010. The specific date and location are to be determined by the ETOP planning subcommittee in coordination with the EPC.
2. Senior Leader Seminar 2010 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 2010 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 \$350M in UASI funds in recent years and it would be beneficial for Senior Leader Seminar 2010 to demonstrate how the resources procured with these funds, including 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 2010 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: Community Awareness, Alert and Public Information

Background:

Every community in the National Capital Region should have the ability to alert and inform all residents and visitors through multiple channels about any emergency. Every person should be exposed to multiple campaigns to raise awareness, preparedness and prevention in relation to all hazards.

Activities:

A community that is aware of its responsibilities and knows where to get information will be able to make informed decisions about protective actions resulting in safer communities and more efficient allocation of resources. This will build public trust and make public officials the primary source of information in a disaster. In today's socially-networked world, the NCR partners need to share information and communicate with the public using the same tools and resources the public is using. R-ESF 15 should continue to work on strategies and tactics for employing social media during disasters.

1. During a disaster, the joint information systems should include monitoring social media channels, updating communication tools to utilize online social channels, and encouraging all partners to develop additional disaster preparedness communications techniques.
2. R-ESFs 15 and 5 should work closely together to condense pertinent information into readable and friendly language, using risk communication methods, to send over the NCR text alert systems and provide via the other information dissemination venues.
3. In light of the current contract with Cooper Notification Inc (formerly Roam Secure) expiring in upcoming years, develop and recommend an architecture and framework for an improved alert and warning capability for the states and localities of the NCR. This project should be pursued with representation of the appropriate regional emergency support functions and include the active participation of public and private stakeholders interested in alert and warning issues. The four key elements in creating a quality Alert and Warning Capability are:
 1. Collaboration and Consensus
 2. Existing Infrastructure Assessment
 3. Interoperability and Integration
 4. Education and Awareness

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 (NCRC), the EPC functions as the federally required Urban Area Working Group (UAWG) 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 NCRC, 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 four full meetings and an EPC Senior Leader Seminar in 2010 with ad hoc work sessions being scheduled as necessary. For example, meetings to finalize plans for the 2010 Senior Leader Seminar and the update of emergency operations plans may be conducted as work sessions, to be scheduled by the EPC Chair and Executive Committee. To promote stronger participation by public officials, EPC quarterly meetings will follow the COG Board of Directors meeting on the second Wednesday from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.:

- February 10
- May 12
- September 8
- TBD Senior Leader Seminar 2010 (Possibly October)
- November 10

V. LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP FOR 2010

Consistent with the EPC bylaws, The Honorable Frank Principi, Supervisor on the Board of County Supervisors, Prince William County was appointed to chair the EPC in 2010 by action of the COG Board of Directors on February 10, 2010. 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 2010 and to the SPG and CAO's (may be delegated to the Emergency Managers Committee) on the update of local emergency operations plans. 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.