

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 100

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Emergency Management Participation

If you have the interest, time, dedication and enthusiasm to get involved in EM this Post should aid you in your learning quest. I have attempted to edit my original master document to an easier somewhat user friendly Post but after proof reading it there is too much information lost, so I chose not to do so. You will notice that there are a lot of two or three letter abbreviations used in my descriptions of departments and support components, eventually you will quickly learn the EM language. In some official documents and message templates you will notice they are constantly used. It won't take long for you to understand their exact meaning or who and what they are referring to, hopefully.

Emergency Management may be defined as;

- a. Emergency management is the managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters. Vision. Emergency management seeks to promote safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters. (Internet Search).**
- b. Emergency management is the managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters. (FEMA).**
- c. An office of emergency management (OEM), alternatively called an emergency management office (EMO), or an emergency management agency (EMA) in some areas, is an agency at the local, tribal, state, national or international level that holds responsibility for comprehensively planning for and responding to and recovering ...**
- d. The Emergency Management Office (EMO) is responsible for emergency planning and coordinating emergency responses. The office works with municipal authorities to help plan for emergencies, coordinate provincial resources when there is an emergency and help with analysis and evaluation after an emergency. We also administer the provincial emergency 911 service. (NS EMO WEB Site)**

This is somewhat a structured official definition wrote by someone who has been in the EM field for quite a few years. Read them slowly and just pick out the two or three letter abbreviations while seeing what comes before and after their placement in the documents. Congratulations you are on your way to a better understanding of the EM language and a good proof reader. Keep up the good work and read on....

The following questions; Who?, What?, When?, Where? and Why? all fall into the Emergency Management (EM) formula and will be briefly addressed within this post.

You will have to dedicate some of your free or leisure time to reading through the many manuals that have been given or assigned to you. Some are only several pages long while other may take you days, weeks or even months to complete.

Watch out for information overload. This is a human mental learning issue that we all have different skills and limitations in. A lot of the time I use these manuals the same way you would use a dictionary or encyclopedia to search on a specific topic. You can have a lot of knowledge on a specific problem, (Specialist) or have a little knowledge on a lot of different topics, (Omniscient). Regardless of how you want to approach your learning curve don't be afraid to ask questions of your coworkers.

You will also discover that these manuals cover a lot of similar topics within their content. Reading through these publications will be very time consuming and sometimes a bit confusing because of the many abbreviated terms of references that are also used. ie...(EMO, EHS, EM, EC). Exposure to these two or three letter abbreviations will eventually be clear.

If possible, try your best, to attend and participate in staff meetings, in-services and local discussion groups regarding all EM subjects. You will eventually gain a fair to good working knowledge of the EM language or trade.

Its only through participation and No-Duff events that will give you the balance or experience that you are looking for. (No-Duff is a military short term meaning actual event or this is No Drill).

Emergency Exercises. These training events will provide you with many positive field experiences, at no stress levels. You will also make some personal contacts with other people with similar interests to you. Always attend planning meetings and debriefings or reviews, read after action reports and discuss the exercise events with supervisors. Through active participation will eventually learn what works and what doesn't work. Conditions such as daylight hours, night time hours and even environmental or weather conditions all effect exercise outcomes.

Training: There is a few different ways and means that you can receive Emergency Management training.

1. Specific training at a university or community college.
2. Completion of EM training modules, either on-line or in-service presentations.
3. Event experience.

Some people have attended all three, great choice for an "Incident Commander". Add EM training to a municipal worker or supervisor and you now have someone in charge and able and willing to follow command instructions. (DND)

When you successfully complete the following entry level, (100 Series), modules and pass your testing process, you will be awarded a completion certificate. Completion of these modules is a prerequisite before moving on to other modules at higher levels. Lets take a quick look at the following publications;

ICS_I100 Incident Command, an introduction to the Incident Command System. This self-paced student workbook will assist you with learning how the different components or command functions are defined and operate. The reporting structures of all these functions will also be explained. Basically it will let you know who reports to who or in other words who your boss or supervisor is. This is useful information especially when you require equipment or additional staff and resources.

IMS_100 Introduction to the Incident Management System for Ontario. This provincial publication follows the ICS-I100 very closely but has many reference that apply to the the province of Ontario. A great source of background subject information.

ICS_ Forms, (Incident Command Forms). This series of forms apply to mostly all events and tasking within the ICS management systems. They all have an assigned form numbers and must be completed in proper sequence before, during and after the incident. Their conclusions, when completed properly, will give you a conclusion report or "After Action Report", with regards to the event. They are legal documents and may be required later for legal review.

ICS-200_ Communications. Another name for this publication is The "Res-ponder Communications Module for ICS-200, Nova Scotia". This manual will explain the following components including; Planning, Command Structure, Purpose of the Communications Unit, Function of the Communications Unit, Responsibilities of the Communications Unit, Responsibilities of the Unit Leader, Auxiliary Communications Support Resources, Mobile Support, Role of the Incident Commander, Use of Plain Language in Your Communications.

EM125 - Guideline for Developing an Exercise Program. This manual will greatly assist you in planning your first, second and even third attempt(s) of any EM Exercise. It is a very thick publication mainly because it covers a lot of detailed events that you as a EM newcomer have never been previously exposed to.

There are also many municipal and provincial guides available for procedural instructions;

HRM Communications Guide. This manual or radio communications guide will explain how the communications protocol functions within specifically the HRM municipality. This is a great source of information on how things specifically work in their geographical area.

Nova Scotia Public Safety Radio Communications Guide. This publication is a fantastic guideline with a vast amount of operational detail(s) for a radio operator.

The ECOA Emergency and Disaster Radio Operations Manual. You will notice that throughout all these publication there is a repeat of many topics. The repetition will positively enforce the learning process. You will eventually see that most EM events are the same and its only the people, staff and geographic locations that are different.

CBRM Emergency Plan. An introductory guide of their Emergency Plan with references to what municipal department, (component), is responsible for what. A lot of municipalities include a graphic flow chart to indicate their direction(s) as a quick reference.

In order for a communications operator to function within this stressful environment he/she should familiarize themselves with as many emergency management documents and publications that they can source, specifically as it applies to Nova Scotia. Other provinces have similar documentation(s) but are only similar in structure however are still a great source of knowledge.

The average radio operator is tasked with a specific job(s) and he/she should be empowered to do their job as best that they can.

Note: If you are a amateur radio operator no "Call-Sign Bingo" please, (HA AH), or the KISS Method. Just use the tactical identification that you are assigned and Industry Canada standards (once) as per their direction, if you are using AR equipment. (Thanks Bob)

Look to see where the communications component function is inserted. There may be some slight differences between the ICS structures and municipal structures. If someone says, (potato/spud) or (tomato/ love apple), its is the same thing but with different terms of reference, (synonyms), they both taste the same .

Emergency Communications Equipment:

If you follow this topic by watching You-Tube videos, you will notice that most amateur radio operators, clubs and support agencies have constructed what they call “go-boxes” or “go-bags”. They include basic vhf/uhf mobile radio units that are powered by battery power. There may or not be battery charging devices associated with this equipment. This equipment is taken to EM events as part of their duty equipment.

A lot of amateur radio equipment is home constructed and or built by the amateurs themselves or in other words “not commercial equipment”. This may or may not be allowed by the EM agencies as there is associations with electrical hazards, (electrocution and fire). Commercial equipment is quite expensive and mostly outside the purchasing power of individuals. CSA equipment has a level of certification and protection for municipal staff, locations and site structures.

Message Handling:

In the past message traffic was by CW (Morse Code). It was the tool of the time or in other words the only tool available. Time and advancements, with the complexity of messages and content, have long exceeded this method, perhaps.

Emergency messages may consist of complex content directed to numerous agencies all within the same time line. Just try to send a message requesting pharmacy supplies and you will see what I mean.

Message Templates:

The ICS has a few specific message templates or forms available for these messages;

- ICS 208 (Safety Message)
- ICS 213 (General Message)
- IMS 213R (Radio Message)

Other EM agencies have their own specific message templates or forms associated with their unique support services.

There are many computer software programs that have and support all EM forms. One such program is “Win-link”. This is an amateur radio program that has the options of generating completed forms on a template(s) and then forwarding them to an email client out box. These completed messages are finally sent to a HF radio VIA a hardware or software inter phase to the internet or the HF radio spectrum.

It's worthwhile to attend any win-link demonstration and or in-service.

Unified Command.

This is one of the best answers or solutions to the EM problem(s). Multiple agencies, resources, staff are all under the sole control of a single Incident Commander. One leader with control of many resources, not necessary theirs. The command structure is most always displayed as a graphic flow chart in all EM manuals.

So who is the Incident Commander? My operational answer is the person who has the most training, and or experience in dealing with the incident at the specific time and location as the "first responder". You may notice that there will be most likely some sort of command transfer throughout the event.

Response time, EM severity and jurisdictions may also come into the problem. All management components and operational staff must buy-in to the Unified Command to succeed. Operational Staff regardless of issues must all work as a Team, remember that.

I hope this Post or discussion gets you thinking about the EM process. Most of my information relates to Nova Scotia and Ontario, look to your own province and municipality for specific publications regarding your own area. I also hope we all will never require these services but at least you will be trained and available when required.

If anyone has any positive comments, suggestions and or input please contact me through my email address, I welcome it. (VE1DPG@hotmail.com)

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