

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Emergency Management Organization (EMO) is to provide for a coordinated response to natural or man-made disasters which strike the City of Muscatine. The City Disaster Plan is intended to lay out the roles and responsibilities of key members of City staff in the event of an emergency which taxes the capabilities of our personnel and equipment resources. This plan, in concert with adequate training and updating should provide the foundation for a successful response to most foreseeable disaster events.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

In any emergency situation the police and/or fire departments are likely to respond. Each department knows and understands the limits of its capabilities and resources. Mutual aid agreements have been struck with other agencies in Muscatine County for situations which exceed the limitations of those capabilities and resources. Under some circumstances, the level of the event may require the initiation of the City Disaster Plan, which provides an even higher level of response to the disaster. Initiation of the plan will summon additional members of City staff who have been trained to provide specific services necessary to deal with the emergency.

Six groups of people are identified in the plan. They are,

1. Policy Group
2. Resource Group
3. Finance Group
4. Disaster Analysis Group
5. Operations Group
6. Human Services Group

The roles and responsibilities of each group are outlined in the next section.

Each emergency scene is under the direction and control of an Incident Commander (IC). As the extent of the disaster becomes evident, or as an existing emergency escalates, the I.C. must delegate more responsibility to others. When it becomes clear that the magnitude of the event does or will exceed the I.C.'s ability to manage effectively, it will be necessary to unfold part or all of the City Disaster Plan.

Likewise, in each EMO group, a number of responsibilities are encompassed. As the disaster escalates further, those in charge of each group have the ability to delegate various responsibilities to designated subordinates.

It is the ultimate responsibility of all EMO members to understand their roles in the organization, the roles of other members, and how all of the actions and assignments are intended to interweave. When it is time for tasks to be done, there should be little question in regards to whose responsibility it is to accomplish the work.

GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy Group. The Policy Group is comprised of the City Administrator, the Public Information Officer (PIO), the Muscatine County Emergency Management Coordinator, the Liaison Officer, and the Mayor, who represents the City Council. The members of this group are responsible on a broader scale for major decision-making and disaster-event oversight. Where there is some question about City policy or procedure, the members of this group are placed in the position of resolving the difficulties. In addition, the Policy Group becomes the point-of-contact for the media and officials from other public, private, or governmental organizations. EMO Staff members, as designated in the organizational chart, are appointed or approved by the City Administrator and are responsible for carrying out emergency operations and advising the Policy Group on matters pertaining to their areas of responsibilities.

Resource Group. The Resource Group's role lies in the provision of resources, as available upon request of other organization groups. Those resources include personnel, equipment, facilities, materials, communications, and volunteers. As the extent of the emergency grows, the ability of the I.C. to effectively find and procure the necessary resources becomes limited. The Resource Group will take over those tasks in order to do so more efficiently, with a greater attention to effectiveness in meeting needs in a timely fashion.

Databases which identify human, equipment, material, and other resources have been created. These lists will help the Resource Officer to know what resources are available and where they are located. It then becomes necessary to acquire the item(s) or call the people requested, and see that support is delivered or the person reports to the appropriate place.

Finance Group. The Finance Group is responsible for the oversight of disaster-related financial affairs. Responding to a disaster may require the expenditure of a significant amount of money, some of which must be allocated on very short notice. In order to respond to the needs of the community while at the same time keeping a handle on expenditures, the Finance Group must monitor the process. The Plan provides for the development of disaster spending policies which must be adhered to by the other EMO groups.

In addition, the Finance Group will participate in the process of documenting disaster-related expenses as it relates to government programs for financial assistance. This role is shared with the Disaster Analysis Group, as they are responsible for damage assessments.

Disaster Analysis Group. The responsibilities of this group relate to damage assessment and recovery activities. Accurate records of disaster-related activity must be kept for government, reimbursement, legal/litigation and archive purposes. The Plan outlines the procedures for assembling damage assessment teams for those purposes. The teams may do damage assessments for purposes of record keeping, or for determining the viability of structures for repair, or for the safety of the emergency responders and the public.

Operations Group. In most emergency situations the police and/or fire departments are called to handle the problems. In every case, an Incident Commander (I.C.) will be in charge of the responding agencies to coordinate the activities. The Plan establishes the Operations Group to assign the emergency response activities to a single I.C. Law enforcement, fire, and medical services are delegated to the respective services while still under the control of the I.C. The nature of the emergency will dictate who the I.C. is, whether the Police Chief, the Fire Chief, the Public Works Director, or someone else capable of filling the role. The I.C. coordinates the Operations Group activities with the other groups of the EMO.

Human Services Group. As the incident develops, whether gradually or suddenly, geographical segments of the community may find themselves at risk. In some situations, the I.C. or the members of the EMO may determine that an evacuation of an area is necessary. The role of the Human Services Group is to assist the evacuees in securing transportation out of the area in addition to meeting the housing and nutrition needs of those who are otherwise unable to find refuge. The evacuees may be students during a fire emergency on a subzero day, the residents or workers in the downtown area in the event of a train derailment, or residents in blocks of homes in the path of another type of threat. As the needs are identified, the Human Services Group is set up to meet them as much as possible.

EMO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The EMO Organizational Chart is intended to illustrate the relationship between the participants in the City Disaster Plan. The magnitude of the emergency will dictate how many of the roles are filled by individual participants. As an example, the resource needs of the Operations Group may not exceed those which the Incident Commander is capable of performing. In another situation, the Resource Officer may be able to effectively perform all of the tasks assigned to the Resource Group. In yet another situation, the Resource Officer may need to assign 2 or more people to perform any one of the assignments of the Resource Group. The chart is not meant to require or limit the assignment of personnel to perform the tasks necessary to deal with an emergency. It will be a fluid organization, in that the number of people involved, and the extent of their involvement will change often as the scope of the emergency changes.

City of Muscatine Emergency Management Organization

