

UNIT ONE

Emergency Management: Setting the Scene



Objectives

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- ➔ Define the role of the emergency manager.
- ➔ State the origin of emergency management in the United States.
- ➔ Define comprehensive emergency management and list its three primary concepts.
- ➔ Identify the four phases of emergency management and what is included in each of these phases.

Who Is the Emergency Manager?

Using the Stage Manager Model

Michael J. Penner, an emergency manager from Olathe, Kansas, uses the following analogy to describe the chaos created by a disaster for which people are not prepared:

Disasters demand near-instant assemblage of a large cast of players and steamer trunks full of props. Dragged along with this hastily assembled troupe are the burdensome baggage of standard operating procedures, administrative guidelines, and emergency operations plans—each unique to the responding actors and usually not fully understood by any.

He goes on to say how the community (the audience) has high and sometimes unrealistic expectations at such times, even as the media (the arc lights) illuminate the scene for all (literally the world) to see. When the disaster is over, he adds, it is hoped that the responders (the cast) will get favorable reviews for their efforts.

Emergency Manager as Stage Manager

Admittedly, this is not a good way to handle an event. But it is far too often what occurs. As the emergency manager in your community, state, or tribal area, you are a stage manager, as well as a producer and a director—all rolled into one. You are a key player in ensuring a well-executed performance.



The emergency manager is a stage manager, producer, and director.

...As Producer

The emergency manager is responsible for coordinating the plans of the various components of the emergency management system—fire and police, emergency medical services, public works, volunteers, and other groups contributing to the community’s management of emergencies. This is the producer role, as Penner views it.

As the producer, we (emergency managers) can ensure that we’ve reserved the proper theater and that all of its facilities are in working order, that all legal documents are well prepared, signed and up to date, that we’ve cast the proper players, and that a budget is in place big enough to pull it all off.

...As Stage Director

As the emergency manager, you are also the stage director, but you must understand your relationship to the rest of the cast.

The emergency manager is not the main actor. During a disaster, the emergency manager helps manage the application of resources that other managers control. A fire chief, a police chief, a public works director, and a medical services coordinator are emergency response managers who control resources. The emergency manager does not replace them or usurp their jobs. The emergency manager helps these other managers apply their resources wisely and in a coordinated way.

...Not the Lead Actor

*In the Stage Manager Model, it matters not whether the lead actor is the City Manager, the County Administrator, the Mayor, the Public Safety Director, the Fire Chief, the Police Chief, the Public Works Director or any other player. **The emergency manager's role remains the same—setting and maintaining the stage.***

Simply stated, you will work closely with all the emergency response managers as you collectively prepare your community for emergencies. While you work closely on a regular basis with emergency responders in fire, police, emergency medical, and public works, remember that your role also includes being part of a national emergency management system capable of responding to emergencies with a national impact.

Part of a Bigger Picture

In more traditional terms, as the emergency manager, you are responsible for building your jurisdiction's piece of a national emergency management system to respond to local or regional emergencies and to national emergencies.

As the emergency manager, you may think that natural disasters and man-made emergencies are the most pressing. Yet, your emergency management tools ("the steamer trunk full of props") and perhaps some of the funding that supports your efforts ("the budget big enough to pull it all off") are a part of America's commitment to effective national security.

Just as you will work closely with other agencies in your jurisdiction to build effective emergency management, you will work closely with governments at the local, tribal, state and national levels to build effective *national* emergency management. This is the essence of the partnership that historically has always characterized this job.

Analysis of the Job

Thomas Drabeck, a prominent researcher in the field of emergency management, studied effective local emergency managers and reported the following in 1987:

Basically, the resulting analysis revealed that effective local emergency managers use strategies for coping with environmental uncertainty similar to those documented for other management executives. Notable was the related finding that the more successful emergency managers work hard at forming and maintaining interagency bonds of mutual aid and cooperation. Insuring the integrity of these invisible webs emerged as very crucial to management success. Other recommendations include the need to coordinate rather than to seek control, the need to establish media relationships, and the need for continued professional development.

Emergency Management In the U.S. Is Not New



Emergency management is not new.

As a formal responsibility of government in the United States, what we now call emergency management began with efforts to address growing threats of fire and disease in large cities and towns in the 19th century.

Pre World War II

Wooden construction and increasingly crowded urban areas raised the risks of catastrophic disasters.

At the same time, government services were minimal. Only a few social services were available through churches and other nongovernmental institutions.

There was thus little capacity for disaster response.



Wooden construction and increasingly crowded urban areas raised the risks of catastrophic disasters.

1803: Passage of Congressional Fire Disaster Relief Legislation

In 1803, American responses to disaster took a significant turn, beginning a pattern of federal involvement that continues to this day. When an extensive fire swept through Portsmouth, New Hampshire, community and state resources were overwhelmed by the response and recovery effort. Congress responded with the first legislative action making federal resources available to assist state and local governments. This congressional act of 1803 is commonly regarded as the first piece of national disaster legislation.

Federal involvement was required by the threat of nuclear war in the days following World War II. For the next 50 years, these efforts resulted in a system of civil defense.

Emergency management is a discipline shaped from these earlier times by response to natural disasters and civil defense programs.

Today's Emphasis

Today the emphasis is on the protection of the civilian population and property from the destructive forces of natural and man-made disasters through a comprehensive program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Types of Emergency Managers



There are many types of emergency managers.

A large city or county may have a full-time emergency manager with a paid supporting staff. There also may be a full-time fire and police department. A small community may have only a volunteer fire department with two or three pieces of apparatus. The emergency manager may also be a volunteer.

You may be in one of these two categories or somewhere in between. Perhaps you are a shared employee, spending part of your time as the emergency manager and another part as a member of

some other public office, such as fire, public safety, planning, or public works. Whatever your situation, this course can help you perform your job.

What Is Emergency Management?

In its simplest terms, emergency management may be as simple as a homeowner responding to a broken water pipe and a flooded basement. Depending on the homeowner's abilities and resources, he or she may handle the emergency and restore services to normal without anyone else's help. In so doing, the homeowner has managed the emergency.

Routine Emergencies

Routine emergencies are daily situations faced by citizens and local emergency services personnel. For example, when firefighters respond to a call, they are managing an emergency. When the emergency medical services (EMS) unit responds to a home or arrives at the scene of a traffic accident, the EMS unit is managing an emergency.

Non-routine Emergencies

Emergency management programs at the local level are responsible for providing overall pre-disaster planning and other programs such as training and exercises for natural and man-caused disasters that can affect a community. They are the first line of defense in coordinating a large-scale event, such as a hurricane or an earthquake, in any community to ensure an effective response to and recovery from such events.



Most emergencies are local.

Response

As shown in the diagram above, while responsibility for responding to emergencies and disasters begins at the nearest level, the next level of response is activated when resources and capabilities are exhausted. At the most basic level, if a homeowner cannot extinguish a fire, the homeowner will call the local fire department. If a local community is overwhelmed and cannot respond to a disaster, it asks the state for assistance. Similarly, when the state's resources are exhausted it will turn to the federal government for assistance. This relationship is spelled out in the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, which can be found at www.fema.gov/library/stafact.



www.fema.gov/library/stafact

It is the intent of Congress, by this Act, to provide an orderly and continuing means of assistance by the federal government to state and local governments in carrying out their responsibilities to alleviate the suffering and damage which result from [...] disasters (Sec. 101(b)).

Common Perception of Emergency Management

The average person probably thinks of emergency management in terms of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, tornado, flood, or ice storm. However, emergency management also embraces man-made disasters such as hazardous materials spills, major transportation accidents, large fires, and, as we recently and unfortunately saw, terrorist events.



Emergency management embraces more than just natural disasters.

Regardless of the type of hazard, it is the responsibility of emergency management to help put in place mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery programs to deal with these hazards.

Government and private organizations have performed the functions of emergency management for decades (for example, Ben Franklin formed the first fire department more than 200 years ago), but only recently did this broader all-hazards approach emerge.

Comprehensive Emergency Management

In this course, the concept used for handling all types of disasters and their consequences is called “comprehensive emergency management” (CEM). CEM was institutionalized with the creation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 1979. FEMA emerged from the consolidation of five federal agencies, each dealing separately with an aspect of large-scale emergencies.

Since that time many state, local, and tribal governments have accepted CEM and changed the names of their organizations to include the words “emergency management.”

More importantly, the name change reflects a switch in orientation from preparedness for single hazards or narrowly defined categories of hazards toward an *all-hazards* approach—attack, natural, and man-made—to potential threats to life and property. As Congress and FEMA have been quick to point out, this change reflects not a *reduction* in security, but

an increased emphasis on making the nation's emergency management capability responsive to any and all major emergencies, including national security threats.

This expansion into new hazard areas was not the only change the introduction of the concept “**comprehensive emergency management**” brought about. Three other closely related concepts came out of this transformation. Let's briefly review each one. The first was the all-hazards approach.

Concept 1: All Types of Hazards

The commonalties among all types of man-made and natural disasters suggest strongly that many of the same management strategies will apply to all such emergencies. So in a real sense, planning for one means planning for all.

The second was the need for a stronger partnership between the federal and the state governments.

Concept 2: An Emergency Management Partnership

The burden of disaster management, and the resources to deal with it, require a close working partnership among all levels of government (federal, tribal, regional, state, county, and local) and the private sector (business and industry, voluntary organizations, and the general public). This makes sense, because disasters have no boundaries.

Concept 3: An Emergency Lifecycle

Disasters do not just appear one day and go away the next. Rather, they have what we might call an “occurrence cycle.” This cycle entails a series of management phases that include strategies to mitigate hazards and prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and their effects.

Basic Terms

Before going any further, let's define each word in the expression "comprehensive emergency management." Let's first look at the definition of emergency.

Emergency

An emergency is any event that threatens to, or actually does, inflict damage to property or people. Emergencies can be small or large, and we often call large emergencies disasters. Disasters can include hurricanes and floods, explosions and toxic chemical releases, major transportation accidents such as airline crashes, and national security events.

Management

Management simply means a coordinated, organized effort to reach specific goals or objectives. In emergency management, it means a coordinated and organized effort to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency.

Comprehensive

Comprehensive is the word that cements all this together. It clarifies "emergency" by including all kinds of natural and man-made events that adversely affect lives and property, including national security threats. "Comprehensive" broadens the definition of management by suggesting the best mix of resources from federal, state, local, and tribal governments and from business, industry, volunteers, and the public.

The word "comprehensive" also introduces a new dimension into the meaning of emergency management. Earlier we alluded to the fact that disasters have occurrence cycles. In that context we mentioned the terms mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. In fact, these are really four different emergency management phases.

As we said earlier, disasters don't just suddenly appear. A hazard exists, but it may take some event or accident to turn it into a disaster. For example, the usually placid river that bisects a town is harmless until torrential rain produces a flood. Propane gas trucks pass through the town on a daily basis, but equipment failure or human error can turn a routine gas delivery into a disaster.

One of the basic principles of comprehensive emergency management is that we can do something useful about the hazard both *before and after* the disaster-triggering event occurs. This is why in comprehensive emergency management the four phases of emergency management work together to form an effective protection program.

The Four Phases

Starting with World War II, emergency management focused primarily on preparedness. But being prepared is only one of four phases of comprehensive emergency management. A community also has many opportunities to deal with emergencies before they strike and a responsibility to aid in recovery after a disaster. The four phases are:



- 1.** Mitigation
- 2.** Preparedness
- 3.** Response
- 4.** Recovery

An entire unit is devoted to each of these phases. For the time being, examine the figure above and look at a brief definition of each so that you can better visualize the broad scope of emergency management.

The four phases of comprehensive emergency management appear in a circular relationship to each other. Each phase links to the others. Activities in one phase may overlap those in the previous. Preparedness moves swiftly into response when disaster strikes. Response yields to recovery at different times, depending on the extent and kind of damage. Similarly, recovery should help trigger mitigation, motivating attempts to prevent or reduce the potential for a future disaster. The disaster phases have no beginning or end, so recognition of a threat can motivate mitigation efforts as well as an actual emergency can.



Sample Activities
in Each Phase of CEM

Please see the Toolkit under Unit One for sample activities in each phase of CEM.

Mitigation

- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦ Protection
- ♦
- ♦ Inspections

Mitigation includes activities that eliminate or reduce the chance of occurrence or the effects of a disaster. FEMA pre-disaster mitigation programs have shown that communities can do a lot to prevent major emergencies or disasters from affecting them negatively. If communities cannot prevent disasters, they can at least reduce the damaging impact. For example, requiring roof reinforcements will reduce damage from hurricane winds. Preventing new construction in floodplains or placing structures on columns in them can reduce the chance of flooded homes. In Unit Three we will discuss other mitigation strategies. Throughout Unit Three, you will read success stories in which local communities discuss the mitigation measures they have taken and the benefits from those efforts.

Preparedness

- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦ Construction
- ♦
- ♦ Monitoring

The next phase of emergency management is preparedness. It is planning how to respond when an emergency or disaster occurs and working to marshal the resources to respond effectively. These activities help save lives and minimize damage by preparing people to respond appropriately when an emergency is imminent or hits. To respond properly, a jurisdiction must have a plan for response, trained personnel to respond, and necessary resources with which to respond. In Unit Four, you will learn how to develop a preparedness plan for your community and to marshal the necessary human and equipment resources.

Response

- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦

Response is the third phase of emergency management and covers the period during and immediately following a disaster. During this phase, public officials provide emergency assistance to victims of the event and try to reduce the likelihood of further damage. Your local fire department, police department, rescue squads, and emergency medical service (EMS) units are primary responders. In Unit 5 you will learn more about your relationship to these emergency responders in your community.

Recovery

- ♦
- ♦
- ♦ Regulations
- ♦ Unemployment Insurance
- ♦

Recovery is the fourth and final phase of the emergency management cycle. It continues until all systems return to normal or near-normal operation. Short-term recovery restores vital life-support systems to minimum operating conditions. Long-term recovery may go on for months—even years—until the entire disaster area returns to its previous condition or undergoes improvement with new features that are less disaster-prone. For example, a town can relocate portions of its flood-prone community and turn the area into open space or parkland. This illustrates how recovery can provide opportunities to mitigate future disasters.

Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS)

FEMA implements the concept of an all-hazards approach to emergency management in its Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS). This effort depends on the principles of comprehensive emergency management while focusing on four specific goals:

- 1.** Fostering a full federal, state, local, and tribal government partnership and providing for flexibility at all levels of government for achieving common national goals.
- 2.** Emphasizing implementation of emergency management measures that are known to be effective.
- 3.** Achieving more complete integration of emergency management planning into mainstream state, local, and tribal policy-making and operational systems.
- 4.** Building on the foundation of existing emergency management plans, systems, and capabilities to broaden their applicability to the full spectrum of emergencies.

To accomplish these goals requires a national program rooted in the efforts of the local jurisdictions. This course helps you begin to acquire the knowledge and practice the skills essential to building a community emergency management program fully integrated into a national emergency management system.

This course and IEMS take into account the fact that each community across the country has its own emergency management capabilities. Some jurisdictions have already put in place the components of an effective emergency

management system. IEMS will build upon these existing capabilities, providing incentives to improve them and further integrate localities, tribes, and states into a national system.

In the IEMS approach, a community that has done little toward developing emergency management activities up to now can begin to develop emergency operation plans for those protection options it judges critical to its well-being.

Hazard Assessment

The process begins with a comprehensive community hazard assessment done in conjunction with state and federal personnel, depending on the circumstances. It then proceeds through a capability analysis (identifying shortfalls of resources), and moves to the development of an operations plan.

Plan Development

This plan becomes complete with the development of a number of annexes for each emergency management function and appendices for the unique aspects of individual emergencies, the maintenance of capability, mitigation activities, emergency operations, and evaluation of such operations.

Jurisdictions that have already developed their planning process more fully may only need to review or update a number of the steps in this process.

Within FEMA's commitment to IEMS rests a commitment to capitalize upon the substantial body of experience in emergency management as well as the vast resources in place in communities throughout our nation.

This course is the first step you, as emergency manager, will take toward participating in the national emergency management system. That involvement begins, most importantly, in your own jurisdiction as you move toward integrated emergency management. As you fulfill your daily activities, ask yourself these questions:

- ➡ How does my work relate to public safety from all hazards?
- ➡ How can I integrate emergency planning into overall community planning?
- ➡ How can I help implement the full partnership of governments and the private sector for emergency management?



Emergency Management
Organizations

Agencies such as your state's division of emergency management and associations such as the International Association of Emergency Managers can provide valuable links to experienced emergency managers. The Toolkit contains a list of private and public-sector groups involved with emergency management.

IEMS and You

The community that constantly considers ways to improve emergency management through integration with other resources, skills, and knowledge will make significant progress toward improved public safety. IEMS provides the broad outlines and specific tasks to make this happen.

Conclusion

Your job as emergency manager is to advise and help implement the planning and coordination for mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery from all disasters.

You do not act alone in accomplishing this in your jurisdiction. IEMS is a partnership with other members of your jurisdiction's staff; the federal, state, local, and tribal governments; private business and industry; and the public. Your job, then, is building and maintaining a partnership that will help fulfill IEMS. Remember, you are the stage manager, director and producer of the program.

Your job involves all types of disasters, all phases of management, and all necessary participants. In the following units you will learn more about the details of the job of emergency manager and the vital role you play in protecting the lives and property of your community.


Learning Check

QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions to test your knowledge of Unit One facts. Read each question carefully, then write in the answer that you think is correct. Answers can be found on page 1-18.

1. What are the three concepts of comprehensive emergency management?

2. What are the two types of disaster each emergency program manager has to consider?

3. Define “emergency.”

4. List at least one action that should be taken in each of the four phases of emergency management for a fire hazard.



Learning Check

QUESTIONS

5. What national program is designed to use local emergency capabilities to build a national emergency management system?



Learning Check

ANSWERS

For every question that you answered incorrectly, review the page listed next to the answer to find out why your answer was incorrect.

1. What are the three concepts of comprehensive emergency management? (See page 1-9.)

All types of hazards

Partnership

Four phases of management in a hazard lifecycle

2. What are the two types of disaster each emergency program manager has to consider? (See page 1-6.)

Natural and man-made emergencies

3. Define “emergency.” (See page 1-10.)

Any event that threatens or inflicts damage to property or people

4. List at least one action that should be taken in each of the four phases of emergency management for a fire hazard. (See pages 1-11 thru 1-13.)

Various actions could be used as examples for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

5. What national program is designed to use local emergency capabilities to build a national emergency management system? (See page 1-13.)

The Integrated Emergency Management System