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DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY  
SERVICES AND PUBLIC  
PROTECTION  
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND  
SECURITY**

**EPPI 2012 After Action Report**

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## Executive Summary

On Monday July 30 and Tuesday July 31, 2012, the State of Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) conducted the first of the state's annual Governor's Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative (EPPI) statewide exercises. This event was mandated by the Governor in the wake of the two major storms, Tropical Storm Irene and the October Nor'easter, that affected Connecticut within a two-month period.

The scenario for this exercise was a simulated category 3 hurricane (The Hurricane of 1938) making landfall in CT. This provided an opportunity to test command staff, supporting leaders, and operational staff in municipalities, private sector business, non-governmental organizations, and State agencies in successfully planning, coordinating, and synchronizing efforts during an emergency. The exercise tested pre-landfall planning and preparedness.

Some of the overall objectives covered were: 1) for municipalities to convene their Unified Command at their respective Emergency Operations Centers (EOC); 2) test Local/State/Utilities Communications Processes/Procedures and communicating with their DEMHS Regional Coordinator; 3) exercise mass care, sheltering and feeding of evacuated or displaced members of their population; and 4) test the "Make Safe" road clearing and live wire neutralization protocol and communications flow with the state's utilities.

This Functional exercise was driven by over two hundred injects, which were part of a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL). The delivery of the injects was accomplished by a Simulation Cell (SimCell) composed of state, local and non-governmental agencies. This flow of information was continuous throughout the exercise six hour duration.

This AAR is intended to assist the State of Connecticut in its efforts to improve current plans and procedures as they apply to responses to natural and Man-made disaster.

## Objectives

### Municipal

**1. Convene municipal Unified Command meetings at the municipal Emergency Operations Center (EOC).** Identify the location and meet there as a team on both days.

- Work together as a Unified Command to perform a variety of activities, including:
  - Review local emergency plans, procedures, contracts and other agreements;
  - Respond to exercise injects;
  - Prepare an Incident Action Plan (a set of objectives and action steps), outlining what needs to be done to prepare for the storm, and who is responsible for doing what within a particular time frame;
  - Review and discuss local Emergency Operations procedures for a hurricane, including evacuation process.

**2. Practice Local/State/Utilities Communications Processes/Procedures**

- Use WebEOC to report preparedness activities;
- Communicate with the DEMHS Regional Office;
- Exercise coordination with electric utilities by developing damage assessment and reviewing and submitting priorities;
- Exercise commodities process by submitting a commodities request;
- Participate in phone conferences if necessary.

**3. Mass Care Sheltering and Feeding**

- Plan for and/or participate in sheltering and feeding, including staffing needs, with an emphasis on multi-town sheltering operations.

**4. Practice the “Make Safe” Road Clearing Protocol and Communications Flow**

- Plan for and/or participate in “Make Safe” operations with local Public Works, utilities, state Department of Transportation, and possible local police and fire. Test the communications flow between municipality, electric utility and DEMHS Regional Office on road clearance/restoration work.

### State Agencies

Exercise and evaluate their capability to provide support to the State and the EOC within respective agency capabilities and as outlined in the State Response Framework.

## Event Scenario

A simulated category 3 hurricane (The Hurricane of 1938) will make landfall in CT. This will provide an opportunity to test command staff, supporting leaders, and staff in municipalities, private sector business, non-governmental organizations, and State agencies in successfully planning, coordinating, and synchronizing efforts during an emergency.

### 2012 Hurricane Season Forecast

- First extended-range forecast for 2012 season predicts a well above-average season
- 13-16 named storms, 8-10 hurricanes, 4-6 major hurricanes [categories 3-4-5 on the Saffir-Simpson scale]

### Storm path



A storm was spotted south of the Cape Verde Islands on July 17.

### 48 hrs pre Landfall

Over the next week it steadily gathered strength and slowly tracked to the west-northwest.

### 24 hrs pre Landfall

By July 27, while centered east of the Bahamas, the hurricane is estimated to have reached Category 5 intensity. In response to a deep trough over Appalachia, the hurricane veered northward, sparing the Bahamas, Florida, the Carolinas, and the Mid-Atlantic. At the same time, a high pressure system was centered north of Bermuda, preventing the hurricane from making an eastward turn out to sea. Thus, the hurricane was effectively squeezed to the north between the two weather systems.

Late on July 27, this set-up caused the storm's forward speed to increase substantially. The forward speed of the hurricane is predicted to reach 70 mph. This extreme forward

motion, being in the same general direction as the winds on the eastern side of the storm as it proceeds north, will cause the perceived wind speed in areas east of the eye to be far higher than will be the case with a hurricane of more typical forward speed. (Winds rotate counter-clockwise around all low pressure systems in the Northern hemisphere, thus winds on the right side of a hurricane—"right" being relative to the direction of motion of the storm itself—are moving in the same general direction as the hurricane. Therefore, the forward motion increases the observed wind speed for points to the right of the eye of the hurricane and decreases the observed wind speed for points to the left of the eye, but in a complex way that defies crude addition or subtraction of the forward motion from the "intrinsic" wind speed of the hurricane.)

### 12 hrs pre Landfall to Landfall

During the early hours of July 28, the storm, centered several hundred miles to the southeast of Cape Hatteras, weakened slightly. By 8:30 am EST, the hurricane is centered approximately 100 miles due east of Cape Hatteras, and its forward speed has increased to well over 50 m.p.h. This rapid movement has not given the hurricane a sufficient amount of time to weaken over the cooler waters before it reaches Long Island. At 9:00 am EST hour, the hurricane will speed through the Virginia tidewater. Between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm EST, the New Jersey coastline and New York City will catch the western edge of the hurricane. At the same time, weather conditions will deteriorate rapidly on Long Island as well as along the southern New England coast.

### Landfall

The full force of the hurricane will reach Long Island after 2:30 pm EST, and the eye will make landfall at Bayport in Suffolk County shortly after 3:00 pm EST. By 4:00 pm EST, the eye will cross Long Island Sound and will make a second landfall just east of New Haven, Connecticut.

The hurricane is at Category 3 intensity at both landfalls and place the maximum sustained winds in the 120–125 m.p.h. range. After crossing Long Island Sound, the hurricane will speed inland.

### Post Landfall

By 5:00 pm EST, the eye will move into western Massachusetts, and by 6:00 pm EST, the hurricane will reach Vermont.

Eastern Connecticut is in the eastern side of the hurricane. Long Island is acting as a buffer against large ocean surges, but the waters of Long Island Sound are rising to unimaginable heights. Small shoreline towns to the east of New Haven have suffered near complete destruction from the water and winds.

In the beach towns along the coast, buildings were found as wreckage across coastal roads. In coastal towns, beach cottages were flattened or swept away. Along the shoreline, buildings were swept off their foundations and found two miles (3 km) inland.

Rescuers are searching for survivors in Windsor Locks where a F4 tornado touched down.

Coastal towns in eastern CT are the first swept by the winds and storm surge; then the (town TBD) waterfront business district caught fire and burned out of control for 10 hours. Stately homes along the beach front are leveled by the storm surge.

Interior sections of the state are experiencing widespread flooding as the hurricane's torrential rains fall on soil already saturated from previous storms. The Connecticut River was forced out of its banks, inundating cities and towns from Hartford, to Middletown.

## **REGIONAL SUMMARIES**

### **AFTER ACTION SUMMARY FOR DEMHS REGION 1**

The following is a summary of some of the key points raised in the after action meeting that DEMHS has held with local emergency management and other public officials in DEMHS Region 1.

First, it was stated that the utility companies worked well with town officials across the board. Seven towns cited their relationship with CL&P and other utility representatives as something that went well. Another similar point that stood out was communications within the region. Westport said that testing their various systems, such as WebEOC, SAT phones, and ICS (incident command system) went exceptionally well. Stamford specifically listed their HAM radio as something that this exercise allowed them to test, and it worked very well. Weston, Wilton, and Easton all cited that their communications and response from Region 1 was great. The next common theme was the personnel that were involved, as well as the amount of participation in this exercise. Easton said that it was good to have their school superintendant and other school people at the table. Along those same lines, Wilton stated that it was nice to have their decision makers present. Weston, Bridgeport, and Darien cite widespread and high participation in their respective towns.

Areas for improvement were also identified, however. Almost all of the towns in DEMHS Region 1 had comments about the injects or inject systems. Westport and Monroe suggested customizing the injects to the towns themselves, something along the lines of a sewer leak. Darien said there are no injects for Make Safe, they were speculating what roads were closed. Stamford's comment was that the first injects were sparse, and the last too compact. Finally, the personnel from Weston claimed there were no answers to the injects. They also stressed the need for more detail in the injects that would require an emergency response. Next, Easton, the local Red Cross, and Monroe all reported problems with the email system, either there were too many, no responses, or duplicates. WebEOC seemed to pose a lot of difficulties for the towns' staff. Monroe stated that it was too cumbersome for the small operation and that it kept timing out. Wilton said that WebEOC needs to be seen by all the towns in the region to be effective. Darien claims that there was no closure of the communication loop; they never got a response from the state. Finally Stamford mentioned that there was no AT&T response to wires and poles.

## **AFTER ACTION SUMMARY FOR DEMHS REGION 2**

In Region 2, there were many benefits that came as a result of this exercise. First, the communications were a big highlight in this region. Ansonia had just received a new radio system and they reported that it had worked very well. Five towns within the region cited the use of their HAM radios as something that worked exceptionally well. In addition, Cheshire, Shelton, UI, Woodbridge and Chester said that their communications both within the region 1 and to DEMHS worked effectively. A drastic improvement in the relationship with the utility companies was relevant in almost all of the towns. Ten towns within the region claimed they had a better relationship with the utility companies, compared to their experiences in the past. Killingworth pointed out that it was good that CL&P got to review their role in the disaster. On top of that, North Branford claimed that they experienced a 110% better communication with their UI liaison. Other comments that stood out had content along the lines of the personnel involved in the EOC and those who were making decisions. Several towns mentioned they've had improvements with their unified command. Old Saybrook said that as a result of this exercise their first selectman is confident in their established plans. Westbrook had an outstanding 13 out of 15 unified command at the table for 2 days. The EPPI also allowed Branford to identify 4,200 people who could not be evacuated. Also, North Branford discovered they had too little training, and that their requests were effectively filled by DEMHS.

A similar suggested area of improvement for all of the regions was WebEOC. Specifically for Region 2, North Branford suggested that WebEOC events should be chronologically listed. The suggestion that better forms are needed in the future came from several towns within the region. Overall, almost half of Region 2 had at least one comment about WebEOC, many of which suggested that the state get rid of it and move onto something else. On that same note of templates and forms, Branford claims that the state needs one location for information to be sent, there was too much paper work required. Shelton suggests that the towns be able to fill out forms online, and be able to save and forward to appropriate agencies. Ansonia and Westbrook both cited a problem with their email; in fact Ansonia did not receive any emails throughout the exercise. Finally, Meriden suggested that there be more staff and more room at the DEMHS Region 2 office.

### **AFTER ACTION SUMMARY FOR DEMHS REGION 3**

The praise for the utility companies continued from the towns within Region 3. East Windsor said that the CL&P mapping priorities were very attentive. Eight towns within the region cited the relationship with CL&P to be exceptional during the exercise. In addition to the comments directed toward the utility companies involved, there was an overwhelming amount of praise concerning the benefit of the EPPI as well as the opportunity to get everyone together in the same room. East Granby summarized it well; they said unified command understood why they had been invited. East Windsor cited good volunteer interest and involvement; they used it as a vehicle to get everyone together in the same room. They also had over 40 town employees participate in the exercise each day. In addition, 16 other towns had a relevant comment about the benefit of the EPPI and the importance of putting all the pieces together in a real-time scenario. Bristol said the exercise allowed them to find some hidden players that they did not know about. Along those same lines, East Granby stated that they identified some resources that they didn't know they had. The commodity ordering tool was a highlight for East Hartford, they said it was easy to use and the ordering went smoothly. Hartford asserted that the coordination of city wide resources and interaction with outside agencies including DEMHS went well. Another comment that stood out was from a representative from Berlin, they said that the departments were forced to now put what they do on paper, which leaves a proven blueprint for the next emergency. The exercise allowed for Rocky Hill to identify 7 or 8 internal areas that could use improvement.

Some of the recommendations identified by those who participated in Region 3 were the need for improvement from CL&P and the other utility companies. Glastonbury claimed that no one on their local CL&P crew knew whether ATT or anyone else was coming to assist them, there was a clear miscommunication between the utility companies involved. Avon cited confusion before and after the exercise regarding their AT&T liaison. Windsor Locks suggests that CL&P pre-deploy trucks when they anticipate that a storm is going to hit. One comment that stood out from Middletown was, that CL&P's involvement was less than helpful, the knowledgeable and capable individual assigned was not given the autonomy in simple decision making. Several other towns also said that there are still numerous issues that the utility companies need to address. Congruent to the other four regions, there were numerous complaints and suggestions addressed towards WebEOC. Approximately one third of the towns in Region 3 had a remark directed towards WebEOC. They pointed out the necessity towards a more polished form, one that does not close out towns, and allows for more streamlined use. Glastonbury suggests that WebEOC should be on fiber, in case of loss of other communications. Ellington suggests that the next exercise should include more injects that are a bit more localized.

## **AFTER ACTION SUMMARY FOR DEMHS REGION 4**

Region 4 had some moderate success using WebEOC, compared to the previous regions. Hampton said that WebEOC was easy for his administrative assistant to pick up. Similar praise was given by Mansfield and Columbia who both said that WebEOC was extremely helpful to them during the exercise. Canterbury stated that WebEOC was useful to keep them abreast of what is going on. Next, CL&P was also a common topic for obvious improvements from the previous disasters. Columbia, Brooklyn, Canterbury, and Lisbon all cited specifically that having CL&P present in their respective EOC was extremely helpful. Nine other towns said that their experience with their respective CL&P rep was good. Communications also went well in Region 4. Both Eastford and Sterling said their HAM radio operators were outstanding, and a great success. Ashford also stated their communication went well; their internet and phones were working extremely well this time. Mashantucket had a brand new plan and this exercise gave them an opportunity to set in motion. As well as they were able to conduct a table top of a natural gas leak in addition to the EPPI. All participating entities were able to establish radio communications with the Region 4 office. Finally, Plainfield and Montville cited flawless interaction with Region 4.

Although there were numerous things that went well, there were also specific areas that need improvement. First, some towns had mentioned some physical EOC improvements that need to be made. Brooklyn said they need to review their shelter capacity and alternate facilities. Both Mashantucket and Plainfield had comments about the need for additional trained people at their respective EOCs. Lebanon said their cell phones didn't work in their EOC and Montville learned that their EOC was in a dead zone. Similar to the previous regions, Region 4 also experienced some difficulties with WebEOC. Killingly pointed out that the ICS forms on WebEOC need improvement. Several towns had suggestions along the lines of Scotland, who said; WebEOC is too cumbersome and it would work best if it was simple. There were several other issues that need to be address according to several other Region 4 towns. For example, Norwich said that there was nothing for 30+ people to do, they pointed out that there weren't enough injects so they created their own problems and addressed them. Hampton is concerned with being cell phone tower reliant, in the next exercise they propose that all towns practice HAM radio, satellite etc. Columbia expressed impatience with having to stay in close contact with Region 4.

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR DEMHS REGION 5**

There were countless examples of things that went well within Region 5. First, the utility companies were a standout for improved performance during this exercise. Nine towns highlighted the fact that the 'CL&P liaison' was something that was much improved. Roxbury said that having CL&P imbedded at the EOC was something that worked exceptionally well. Next, several other towns cited the personnel present in the EOC as well as the Unified Command as strong points. Naugatuck used the exercise to identify new people in the EOC. Nearly half of the towns in Region 5 mentioned the importance of their unified command team, which in turn lead to the EPPI being a great success. Some other benefits that came as a result of the exercise are, Morris said that they are now more informed on how to reach DEMHS. New Milford stated that becoming familiar with WebEOC will aid future emergency responses. Several towns including Brookfield and Salisbury pointed out that the injects were realistic as well as they were able to give answers to most if not all of them. Danbury cites their effective communication back to DEMHS and WebEOC as a strong point. And finally, Barkhamsted said that this exercise should happen more often.

This exercise brought about several areas of improvement for Region 5. WebEOC posed just as much difficulty for Region 5 as it had for the other towns. Barkhamsted, for example, said while using WebEOC there was an inability to go to town and it was awkward and difficult to use. More than eight towns cited concerns with WebEOC going forward. Next, Southbury proposed that a state statute should require that new schools that would be constructed, should have a generator to power utilities. Along those same lines, all new senior housing should have generators as well. New Fairfield is concerned with the state closing the communications loop, they did not hear back on any 'requests' made. Barkhamsted also suggested that there be an AT&T liaison present, and the state needs to differentiate among small and large communities as well as those along the shore. Winchester highlighted the need for a contact person from DEEP for communication regarding flood control dams. In addition, Thomaston raised the issue of animal sheltering, and stated that the state should take action regarding the topic. Both Watertown and New Milford both claimed that some of the injects were unrealistic.

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR MASS CARE**

### Task Force Activities

- Task Force members reported to State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) on both days of exercise.
- On July 30 focus on Task Force was to consider any steps/guidance for pre landfall of hurricane. Members reviewed Emergency Support Function #6 Mass Care Annex of the State of Connecticut's Local Emergency Operations Plan.
- Task Force completed required forms to verify participants and contact information each day.
- Task Force members successfully logged into WebEOC each day to monitor local activities; review shelter information as posted by local emergency management directors.
- Task Force members worked collaboratively to respond to request to identify shelter at capacity at each of the state university campuses. This included Western, Central, and Eastern Connecticut State Universities.
- On July 31, 2012 Task Force Members responded to post landfall hurricane events as needed.
- Task Force members also interacted/ conferred with other Task Forces and Agencies represented at the SEOC. This included the Commodities Task Force, the Water Task Force, the Recovery Task Force, the Donations Management Task Force, the SEOC Operations staff and the FEMA liaisons.

### Task Force Recommendations for Improvement

- On-going testing/exercising/planning for mass care and sheltering.
- Clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of task force members.
- Clarification on whether Mass Care Task Force is a policy Task Force or an operational Task Force. If a policy focus, considerations of best utilization of task force members during an incident to be evaluated.
- WebEOC is a valuable tool to use during an incident. On-going and regular training of task force members will be needed to maximize use during an event.
- More injects from the SIM cell during an exercise would be valuable to enhance task force roles.

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT INTERAGENCY DEBRIS MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE**

### **Pre-Landfall**

- Governor authorized the activation of the IDMTF and the pre-positioned debris management contract with AshBritt and the debris monitoring and documentation contract with SAIC.
- DEMHS/DESPP notified DAS that the contracts were activated.
- Debris management guidance distributed to municipalities.
- DEEP issued Emergency Authorizations for State Agencies and Municipalities to temporarily stage storm debris.
- IDMTF issued task orders 1A/B, 2A/B to contractors to initiate planning and to instruct the contractors to mobilize equipment and crews to the state/region.
- DMTF confirmed with ConnDOT, AshBritt, and SAIC initial estimates of assets needed for push and shove.
- ConnDOT indicated equipment needs from State contractor include: 50 bucket trucks, 50 grapple trucks, and 100 teams, based on 1,000 road miles that are anticipated impassable. DOT is assessing additional equipment needs based on the forecast and will be proposing additional equipment.
- Contractor staged equipment in Pennsylvania and New York. ConnDOT identified locations for equipment to be staged once contractors enter Connecticut. Within 24 hours after landfall contractors will be helping with assessments with ConnDOT and establishing equipment staging areas.
- Contacted DOT permitting divisions to assist with oversize/overweight permits for contractors' equipment both for Connecticut and interstate travel. Requested ConnDOT permitting division to assist with contacting other states' truck permitting units to ensure equipment can travel to Connecticut.
- Utility members of IDMTF informed their respective utilities that disaster debris management contractors have been activated.
- IDMTF notified, for awareness purposes, the ESF12 task force that debris management contractors have been activated.

### **Post Landfall Response and Recovery**

- Disaster debris management contractors in state and staged equipment and crews in New York State being moved into Connecticut.
- On-going-ConnDOT revising equipment needed from State contractor.
- Issue Task Orders as needed
- Confirm with Energy and Communications Task force if any equipment gaps exist among utilities.
- Identify state properties for staging equipment post-landfall: Dept. of Agriculture's Regional Market in Hartford is being used for contractor's trucks.

- Contact private property owners obtain permission to use parking lots for staging equipment and initial debris from road clearing of state highways and roads near critical infrastructure.
- ConnDOT permitting division working with State contractors and other states on providing temporary permits to allow contractors' oversized vehicles to cross bridges to pass through their state and to enter Connecticut.
- Coordinate with DMV and CSP regarding contracting equipment coming into and operation in the state (travel ban).
- Contact resource recovery facilities and determine their availability to receive green waste.
- IDMTF, through DEEP's Disaster Debris Management website, post guidance for municipalities from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (Wallingford Office) regarding the wood quarantine for invasive species: Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Longhorn Beetle.
- DEEP issued Emergency Authorizations for State Agencies and Municipalities to temporarily store processed storm debris.
- Daily meetings/conference calls which continued until all the storm-generated debris reached its final destination; monitored the IDMTF email box; provided updates at the daily Governor's Briefings for State Agencies and local municipalities; Guidance Memos developed by IDMTF and sent out to the local CEOs and EMDs throughout the response.

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Staffing at SEOC: Daily. In addition, IDMTF members monitored their dedicated outlook account and WebEOC.

Meetings and conference calls: Daily with: IDMTF members, Unified Command, and Statewide Conference Call,

Interaction with other Task Forces & Agencies represented at the SEOC: Energy/communication task force, OPM/GIS, Make Safe Coordinator

### Best Management Practices

- Use of WebEOC to disseminate information to EMD's
- Expanding the membership to include ALL the agencies involved in effective deployment and utilization of resources. For example: Overweight permitting, travel ban coordinators, etc.
- Interactive communication with ConnDOT and the utilities to determine resource needs and facilitate coordinating responses.

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### Recommendations for improvement:

- DESPP/DMHS to identify the conduit for Damage Assessments – Coordination and Timeliness
- Will be asking assistance of OPM, DAS/facility and property management, and DCS to identify contacts with state agencies that own and are

responsible for the maintenance of properties which might be damaged. Such agencies will be receiving guidance about documentation and procedures and information on use of the state's debris contractors (pre event and post event)

- Schedule and hold meeting with OPM, in collaboration with the GIS personnel with various agencies, to address:
  - Information on state properties from various agencies [DEEP properties, DOT properties, DAS/DPW managed assets, other sources] and create a standard "state properties" map that identifies parcel boundaries and is updated regularly, along with a list. This would potentially include state managed properties even if not owned by state
  - We recommend that an overlay be created that identifies pre-designated disaster response and recovery uses and provides for real-time updating of designated uses with additions and subtractions as actual events require.
  - Recommend that as part of statewide pre-landfall hurricane preparedness the statewide property map be updated with ownership information.
  - Clarification of who has authority to designate prioritized uses of state properties.
  - Identification of Debris Management Site Properties.
    - Will be asking assistance of OPM, DAS, and construction Services about state agencies having paved parking areas on a 10-40 acre site. Will also be looking to find private properties with those criteria.
    - Will use CERC – CT Economic Resource Center
- Check in with debris finance group to learn progress of how the finances will be handled and at what point the Governor's office decide on providing contractor assistance to municipalities' requests. Ask to attend an IDMTF meeting.
- Travel ban:
  - Confirmation of procedure for notifying task forces when a travel ban is in effect (WebEOC?)
  - Even though the debris management Concept of Operations Plan notes that we will inform the State Police/DMV through State EOC Operations Officer that equipment, vehicles, and personnel are entering the state, we need to be prepared to inform the state's contractors that a travel ban is in effect and what procedures they need to follow if they are stopped by State Police/DMV
- Location of Operations for the IDMTF.
- Increased use of the DEEP website – with other state agency websites linked to it
- FEMA/State preliminary Damage Assessment Teams – PDA. – Timing of PDA, Team Members identification and identification of qualifications needed.
- Earlier identification of Scope of Work needed from the contractors:

- What state agencies will need to use the contractors.
- What equipment will be needed and in what amounts.
- Debris issues – waterways, wetlands, beaches, bridges, many forms of debris.

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR WATER TASK FORCE**

### **Executive Summary**

This Water Task Force After Action Report is a compilation of feedback provided from each task force member, internal discussions at the Drinking Water Section and input garnered from the water sector at the DWS EPPI exercise hotwash held during the last DWESAC meeting. In an attempt to not replicate policy making and regulatory duties already conducted by DPH, DEEP and PURA, but recognizing the value of the collaboration and communication derived from the task force's water sector expertise, it is recommended that the Water Task Force focus its efforts to aid the Governor and the regulatory agencies in an advisory capacity. WebEOC is also a big component of managing a response for the water sector, and efforts in this area should be continued and/or expanded. This AAR will outline the actions taken by the Water Task Force during the exercise, perceived success of convening the task force, and recommendations for improvement at both the task force and regulatory agency levels.

### **Water Task Force Role**

TO provide subject matter expertise from the water and wastewater industries to the Governor's Unified Command during an emergency. To aid the industry before, during and after an emergency in an attempt to facilitate a quick and safe restoration of water and wastewater utilities, assess sufficiency of drinking water quality and supply and coordinate risk communications with consumers as necessary.

Day 1: Pre- Landfall – regulatory authorities made contact with water/wastewater utilities to check operational status, pre-staging emergency generators, topping off fuel and treatment chemical tanks, developing staffing plans and discontinuing use of facilities prone to flooding. Work with utilities on possible evacuation plans and public messaging.

Day 2: Post- Landfall – due to the severity of scenario, assumed that many water/wastewater systems are not operational due to lack of power, inaccessibility and distribution failures. Regulatory authorities worked to make contact with all systems with mixed results. Due to the extent of the power outages and inability to confirm

operational status, a statewide Drinking Water Advisory was advised by the task force and subsequently requested by the governor.

## Successes

- Representatives from 3 regulatory agencies (DPH – drinking water, PURA – drinking water, DEEP – wastewater) , the state’s four largest water companies, 2 large wastewater utilities, and CTWARN (voluntary Water Sector mutual aid and assistance organization) came together to make up the task force. Great opportunity to learn from each other and open communication lines between utilities and regulators.
- Existence of Water Task Force reinforces the concept of water and wastewater utilities (composing the Water Sector under the NIMS) as being critical infrastructure utility during an emergency.
- Easily able to communicate with other task forces and agencies represented to solve water-related problems that are funneled up to SEOC – worked with Fuel/Energy task forces and Energy Utilities to insure large ware and wastewater facilities are prioritized.
- Understanding and usefulness of SLOSH maps.

## Recommendations for improvement

- **Priority #1** –need to clearly identify role of the Water Task Force with respect to Regulatory Agencies (DPH, DEEP and PURA). The regulatory agencies are responsible for setting policy with respect to the water sector and all have seats at SEOC; the task force shouldn’t be replicating duties already being handled. The water-sector expertise is the missing component, and should be available to the staff managing the incident at the SEOC when needed.
- **Priority #2** – continue working on having drinking water utilities represented on WebEOC with a “water board” for regulators to better track utility operational status and needs. Discuss WebEOC access and training issues for utilities. Is WebEOC possible for DEEP and wastewater utilities as well – maybe coordinate through municipalities since most wastewater is municipal owned?
- Convening the group – concerning about providing 24/7 task force representation at the SEOC. Can the water task force be convened remotely and at what points would it be activated and stood down? This remote communication would be at the risk of losing the benefit of a physical presence in the SEOC.
- Balance of task force representation to make sure that task force members from the utilities are able to represent the diversity of Connecticut’s water/wastewater sector.

- Develop a list of instructions for commodity requests such as bulk fuel delivery. Establish if such requests should be sent to DPH, DEEP, Regional DEMHS coordinator or SEOC. Establish a list of the information needed for review and fulfillment of the request. Also, review when state bulk fuel contracts would be made available.

## Regulatory Agencies

- Consider establishing emergency email addresses for DPH drinking water, DEEP sewage treatment and dam impoundment for updates issued by water sector utilities during emergency events. The central email address could automatically forward to multiple staff within the agency to help prevent bottlenecks and ensure continuity of communications through shift changes. Otherwise, regulatory agencies should make contact with utilities to establish who will be the primary contact(s) for the duration of the event.
- Pre-event messaging to citizens regarding water/wastewater preparations is a good idea. A standardized message should be drafted now for use during any event which would result with a prolonged power outage, leading to loss of pressure/water service. Replicating the Ready.gov information would be appropriate.
- Need to develop triggers for pre- and post- emergency messaging on a statewide basis
- Statewide drinking water advisory needs to have clear instructions for customers of water companies as well as state citizens with private wells.
- Statewide drinking water advisory will have tangible impacts on commodities – more municipalities will be requesting bottled water, etc.
- Need to assess additional options for utilities and regulators to maintain open lines of communication in the event of a loss of phone (land and mobile) and email (WebEOC) capabilities. Also, existing establish if DPH and DEEP could monitor status for utilities via existing radio systems.
- Water and sewer utilities should be reminded that they need to meet with the emergency operations coordinators in each of the towns/cities which they serve since CL&P's critical facilities lists are maintained radio frequencies utilized by water and sewer utilities should be reviewed to by the towns. Utilities should meet with each town/city to ensure that all critical facilities are added to the town's critical facilities for prioritized power restoration.

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION TASK FORCE**

### What Worked

- Training by the Army Corp of Engineers
- Procedural – DOC / flow
- Handling & accountability
- National Guard re-conned site operations prior to storm; Rentschler Field was selected.
- DEMHS financial assistance
- Size and Scope of event was manageable
- Committee / key players were identified
  - 1<sup>st</sup> meeting held before storm
  - Determined chain of command
- Procedure for donated supplies
- Transportation – variety of vehicles to maximize deliveries
  - Judicial Marshal's vehicles
  - DPH
  - DOC refrigerator truck

### What didn't work

- Resource volume
- Flow from ops to field to towns
- Towns were not prepared
- Demand went up as time went on
- Commodities requests came in late in the day
- Follow the plan!
- Structure and planning

### What could be improved

- Structure – organizational
- Taskforce chairs – meet before or after individual taskforce meetings to keep linked
- Guard visibility of their trucks - electronic
- Communication / Flow / Roles and responsibilities: from towns to their regional offices to operations to field
- Integrate civilians with military and work within separate policies
- Reports with dates added
- Materials Handling Equipment – Staging area
- Towns – have their local EOC set-up and staffed; annex for delivery
- Plan for regionalization
- Plan for after demobilization (do earlier)

- Better burn rate plan; need at least 48 hours
- Upfront work with towns (indicator for ordering)
- Tie-in with shelters & red cross
- Have plan B for field site prior; primary/secondary site (issue w/ UCONN game)
- Army Corp. procedures – earlier
- Determine units of measure for ordering, delivering, accounting and reporting
- Have plan based on options
  - Delivery plan- organize around separate mission (this was an exception to the rule)
- Load at night; deliver & receive during day
- Plan for worst case; air life to deliver
- Liaison office team to each regional office
- Information to towns
  - Process
  - Communication
  - Education
  - Prepare operational plan
- Set up preexisting contracts
- Categorize towns for size/capacity

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE**

### Observations

- The communication providers consider most of the information discussed to be confidential and wish the data to be protected from disclosure to the public or to their competitors. This made discussing details in the broader group very difficult. We were successful discussing summary data in the broader group and leaving the details for the written report.
- The first several meetings of the communication task forces were difficult. It took concerted efforts by all parties to establish the trust required to collaborate on restoration. We continued to emphasize that we could not provide assistance and escalation if data was not shared.
- Having data from the DHC/OEC was critical in providing triangulation points in conversations with the providers. When the providers discussed limited information or glossed over important details, the information gleaned from OEC could be leveraged to gain additional data from the providers.
- Cable outages and restoration tracked closely with commercial power loss and restoration.
- Level of involvement by communication providers is critical. Most effective representatives were those that could release information and that understood the needs for rapid escalation. Governmental affairs VPs were a good level. Lower level representatives don't appreciate the need for cooperation.
- One of the important outcomes was facilitating the embedding of cable providers into the EOC of the utility providers to coordinate service restoration. Major telecom providers already have this access; however, having the cable companies added to the discussions
- Carriers reported that the Task Force structure focused on communication made it easier to deal with the needs of the EOC. Particularly in coordinating needs. The focus by the state on the communication issue helped raise the importance within the carriers.
- It was suggested that a common information sharing template would be helpful. It could be agreed upon beforehand with companies so that questions about what could and could not be shared would be worked out in advance.
- One meeting of the Task Force should be convened PRIOR to landfall when possible to ensure a smooth movement into recovery mode. Discussions about generator staging pre-landfall can also speed time to recovery.
- An annual meeting of the group outside an emergency event was suggested to keep the contact list up to date
- A data collection template that was pre-approved with all the carriers could help data reporting during a future emergency.

**AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR**  
**EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION 12: ALL HAZARDS AND UTILITIES**

Possible improvements

- Embedding telecommunications into regional utility operation centers
  - Subgroup to work on this issue
  - Standardized and simplified approach—one point of contact
- Telecommunications represented on regional planning teams-ESF12
- Fortify ESF in each region
- DEMHS regions need to be the point of contact to pass info to towns from telecommunication, utilities, etc.
- Clarify E911 protocol
  - (in make safe guidance)
  - Their priority calls, not emergency dispatch – priority 1, 2, 3
- Clarification of liaison role/deployment/relationship

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR EOC & STATE PARTICIPANTS**

### **Suggestions**

- UI service area municipalities represent almost 1 million residents. Company should be in equal footing. A task force leader had to be reminded several times that UI is part of the efforts. One response was “you’re only 17 towns”.
- Do not build reliance on WebEOC. We can use it fine, but there is no “communication” involved. It is just a reporting tool in this type of event.
- The distinction between PURA’s work with the utilities and the work of ESF-12 is not clear
- This should probably be an annual event early in the hurricane season
- Perhaps a winter storm or ice storm exercise
- Limit Task Force ability to execute ARFs directly without going through the applicable General Staff chief.
- Improve mechanism for communications with task force (we need clarification and had no way of reaching the task force and didn’t know the proper channels to ask)
- Better utilize the Region 3 REPT RCC and its staff to serve the needs of the communities and DEMHS.
- Commodities requests from towns need fine tuning to include more detailed contact info
- Both internal and external – WebEOC training – what to look for and how to effectively determine different aspects of the tools at hand
- Many of the task forces upstairs were complaining about a lack of communication with downstairs
- The desktop at the Regional office was in need of many updates and upgrades
- Communities and hospitals have to be held accountable for updating their information in the WebEOC system unless they lost access.
- Who in the organizational structure do the task forces report to and should be liaising with task forces with requests
- What is the role of each of the task forces? Are they policy setters, or do they only provide guidance, are they decision makers?
- We need a list of commodities and vendors on the state contact that we can supply the towns with, and a list of those we cannot
- Test a smaller storm - it would allow for an entirely different set of injects

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR WebEOC**

### **Criticisms and suggestions**

- WebEOC enhancements overdue, it seemed to be a black hole
- There were apparent delays of information appearing on the WebEOC screen; more training on WebEOC is needed
- In some cases DEMHS had to physically ask DEEP to accept an assignment (could not do in WebEOC because it was not assigned to DEEP)
- WebEOC needs to be reworked to make it a tool where information that is entered in, it can more easily be reported out
- Situational awareness within WebEOC is impaired by communities using local sit reps to convey significant events.
- WebEOC needs major improvements and they should be driven by those of us who use it the most. The Regional usage is very different from the usage at the SEOC. The town usage is very different from the regional usage.
- Commitment to WebEOC: we are still relying on too many forms of communication. WebEOC should and can handle everything. When in a large scale, complex and expanding incident, switching between email and WebEOC is inefficient
- WebEOC should be re-examined by a team of operations-minded DEMHS staff for a round of modifications/improvements. Then perhaps a step-by-step guide could be supplied to municipalities so everyone is using each feature how we want them to use it
- Expanded use of WebEOC but with more practical training
- Provide mock scenarios to further enhance skill level for using WebEOC
- WebEOC refinements to reduce time searching, streamline information flow
- Participants need greater understanding of web-EOC and how to accept a task or add info
- Functionality needed within WebEOC to better manage what has been posted, how it is tracked and how the info has been followed up on.
- WebEOC functions- some (especially Sit Rep could be updated to allow easier data consolidation – Evacuation Task Force is not included in WebEOC
- Mission task process does NOT work through WebEOC. I shouldn't have to search through all requests to find the ones that pertain to me.
- The mission task system does not allow us to ask specific questions or communicate while keeping everyone in the loop. If I change a mission task and a request something such as more information, there is no record of the original request. Therefore, I cannot track new information or refer to old info.
- Improvement to WebEOC needs to occur; WebEOC protocols need to be established to determine who inputs and deletes shelter information in WebEOC
- We need WebEOC to do ops as well as information management

- Have a drop down box for commodities with just the things that the state can supply

## **AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR INTERNAL**

### WebEOC frustrations and comments

- IAPs were filed, forms are a database and shouldn't be
- Can WebEOC provide notifications when a new entry comes in?
- Regional WebEOC would help
  - Example - Region 1 significant events, Region 1 requests for assistance, Region 1 current sit rep
- WebEOC needs to be provide summaries for statistical purposes
- Either make it easier or get rid of it, regional office cant review it while incident is going on
- Alert back to regs/locals when more info is needed
- Sign in was too confusing, need small group localized training in regions

### Additional comments

- Problem when commodities task force asked for additional info-process broke down
- Nice to have more state agencies at EOC
- Nice to think of next exercise focusing on region
- Remember EMDs, especially little towns. Every time they have to do an extra action it cuts away from their other work – try to simplify
- Sit rep documentation – needs to have a fill-able form, 5 buckets
- MRC protocol – have everyone's contact info- name, position, etc..
- Needed to see that the communications loop was closed, this could be as simple as a color code
- Primary flow of information needs to be reinforced
- Towns didn't check emails ahead of time
- DOT communication issues

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