
Emergency Management Training

This article is extracted from the *Emergency Program Manager*. This book remains, in the opinion of the instructor, one of the best quick reference books for emergency managers. It is slightly dated and does not include the Emergency Support Function concept.

Training

As an emergency program manager, your job covers several broad areas of responsibility including efforts to mitigate disasters, plan preparedness, and coordinate response and recovery. To adequately handle all these tasks, you need a variety of skills that can be gained through training available from municipal, county, state, and federal government programs plus many organizations in the private sector. Although you may not become an expert in everything, you need to take advantage of all the training opportunities you can to become a better emergency program manager. Moreover, you should convey as much of your knowledge as possible to your own staff so that they will be better prepared in time of emergency or disaster. Thus, your role in training is to both learn and teach.

State training programs often seem the most accessible to emergency program managers. Below, you will see that not only do states offer training, but also the federal government and many counties and municipalities.

State Programs

Most states have training and educational programs for emergency program managers which are coordinated by a state training officer. Classroom instruction is often provided in the areas of emergency management, preparedness planning, emergency operations, and career development. Often, participation in these programs is not limited to the emergency program manager, but is open to all people who hold emergency operations positions. You can select programs which may be of benefit to specific people on your operations staff, and arrange for them to attend.

The state training officer is a valuable resource, even if you are unable to participate in any of the programs offered by your state. The training officer can serve as an advisor, helping you define your training needs or suggesting other training resources which may be of value to you.

THINGS TO DO

Contact your state training officer and find out what training programs your state offers, when they are given, and who can attend.

Some states have EMERGENCY OPERATIONS SIMULATION TRAINING. People from the state training office come into your community and conduct a simulation exercise. In other words, they stage a mock emergency to test your preparedness plan. In the process, all those who participate in the simulation learn from their experience. You learn where the plan was properly executed and those parts of the plan which were not carried out properly. Most of all, you learn if the plan was able to meet the demands of the simulated emergency. It is better to find out where the plan needs improvement

in a simulation than to find out in an actual emergency. You may also want to take a course that will teach you how to conduct your own exercises.

THINGS TO DO

Arrange a meeting with the state training officer. Find out if the state conducts simulation exercises.

Federal Opportunities

FEMA provides a variety of opportunities for continuing education as part of its PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM. The subjects of FEMA training are as varied as the emergency management profession. They range from fallout shelter management to working with public officials. They improve the personal effectiveness and professional stature of emergency program managers. As an emergency program manager, you are urged to take advantage of as many of them as you can. The methods of instruction include home study courses such as this one and classroom instruction for the more detailed study of emergency management.

The FEMA regional training and education officer can tell you what programs are available for you and your emergency management and operations staff. Let's look at a few of them that may be of interest to you.

The first home study course is the one you are holding, The Emergency Program Manager: Orientation to the Position. As you have seen, it is designed to provide the basics of the job for the emergency program manager.

Another home study course, Emergency Management, U.S.A., gives much the same orientation to the public.

This course provides a good overview of many topics with which both the public and the emergency program manager should be familiar.

One other home study course that should be of interest in your nuclear attack and fixed nuclear facility preparedness is called Radiological Emergency Management-. Its subjects include fallout effects, exposure monitoring, and protective and decontamination measures.

Residential and field training provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency emphasize performance based exercises, highlighted by the Integrated Emergency Management Course joining personnel from all departments and agencies in a community to practice policy-making, planning, and emergency operations.

The Integrated Emergency Management Course's subject areas include the definition of emergency management, the relationship between military defense planning and emergency management planning, nuclear weapons effects, shelters, natural disasters, warning, emergency operations, support programs, and governmental responsibilities for emergency management.

In addition to the Integrated Emergency Management Course, major topic groupings of the FEMA Training Program include sessions in four areas:

- 1.) The Emergency Management Process Curriculum provides training that cuts across subject areas and hazards to provide personnel with the management and problem-solving skills needed to effectively lead a community in an emergency. Included is a professional development series for emergency program managers, as well as upper-level workshops and seminars dealing with a broad spectrum of contemporary emergency management problems and issues. The audience for these courses, which build heavily on training at the State and Regional levels, includes the emergency program manager; emergency operations managers in law enforcement, fire, public works, and emergency medical; and public officials in

local government to whom the laws entrust the responsibility for protection of the lives and property of citizens.

2.) The National Preparedness Program Curriculum provides an overview of the multi-jurisdictional civil preparedness program including civil defense policies, nuclear civil preparedness and crisis relocation, planning economic stabilization, and special subjects such as shelter design, industrial protection, and the National Defense Executive Reserve. The audience for these varied courses includes emergency program managers, architects and engineers, industrial emergency planners, Regional and State personnel with responsibility for developing and conducting multi-hazard evacuation exercises, and nuclear civil protection planners.

3.) The Natural Hazards Curriculum explores areas of natural hazards which focus on planning, response, recovery, and mitigation. Some courses focus on fundamentals, exploring the characteristics and causes of the major natural hazards while others deal with highly specialized training and exercises designed to test the participant and his or her community in terms of hazard identification, mitigation, response ,operations, recovery, and community planning. Participants in these courses range from emergency program mangers; federal, state, and local personnel involved in all phases of natural hazard programs; and specialized audiences such as hazard mitigation teams.

4.) The Radiological and Technological Hazards Curriculum deals with contemporary problems associated with nuclear power plants, nuclear weapons accidents, and the manufacture, transport, and storage of nuclear and other hazardous materials. Also included among these courses is radiological defense in a nuclear attack. Attendees at courses in this curriculum include federal, state, local, and nuclear power plant radiological health physics personnel; RADEF officers; and utilities staff and those involved in off-site nuclear plant emergency planning.

Advanced training in each of these curriculum areas is offered by FEMA to graduates of these programs on topics of current interest. Generally, the participants must complete assigned advanced reading or research to be able to discuss the topic during the seminar.

FEMA has a National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland that offers courses in comprehensive emergency management through a well planned and coordinated schedule of activities at the Emergency Management Institute. Also located at the National Emergency Training Center is the National Fire Academy. Together, these institutions provide comprehensive and integrated training to improve the personal competence and professional standing of the emergency program manager.

No tuition is charged for any of the EMI classes at the training center, and all instructional materials are provided. FEMA also provides partial reimbursement for the expenses of training at Emmitsburg. Application for attendance or more information about the training center may be obtained from state emergency management offices.

THINGS TO DO

Contact your county or state training office and determine which federal training Programs are available and appropriate to you.

Local Training Opportunities

Often there are many local training opportunities for the emergency program manager. For example, to improve the emergency response phase of your job, you can actively participate in or observe the training programs or exercises of your local fire or police department.

From the management standpoint, check the classes offered by your local community college or the adult evening classes at a local high school.

Often the course on basic management principles offered by these institutions are very good, and the principles learned can be applied directly to your job. Check the classes offered on budgeting and financial planning as well.

Don't overlook the opportunities for training from service agencies such as the Red Cross. Often their programs in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), health care, and life saving may be important, especially if you are not knowledgeable in these areas.

Finally, there are often training opportunities offered in the private sector by various companies which an emergency program manager can participate in. For example, a local chemical plant may have "in-house" training programs in hazardous materials management. If you come across companies dealing with hazardous materials in your hazards analysis, check to see if they have training programs for their staff. Ask to be notified when they occur and if you can participate. Most companies would be more than happy to have you as a participant or observer.

The Emergency Program Manager As Instructor

Training and education is more than just educating you, the emergency program manager. Emergency program managers are teachers. The entire local community is in need of the training and education that the emergency program manager can provide. The knowledge you gain from every seminar you attend, every visit from the state emergency management office, every training exercise must be passed on to elected officials, administrative staff, and emergency operations staff. The passing on of this knowledge is part of your education function as an emergency program manager. You must keep your superiors as well as your subordinates and co-workers informed.

Also, as you learned earlier, you must also keep the public informed.

How you work with the home study course, Emergency Management U.S.A., is a good example of your education role.

First, you need to PROMOTE to the public the idea that the course would be useful to them.

Second, you may need to INSTRUCT members of the public to help them get through the course both by providing information and incentives for study.

Third, once the public becomes educated about the basics of emergency management, you need to be a continuing RESOURCE to them for further information and training.

Let's look at how your function as an educator can be carried out.

Individual Instruction: Individual instruction is on a one-on-one basis where you sit down with one trainee at a time to teach a particular skill. This may sound very formal, and it is if you are showing a subordinate how a specific piece of equipment works or how your warning system is activated. However, showing a senior citizen volunteer how your filing system works is also individual instruction.

Meetings: Many meetings are a form of instruction. Any time a group gets together to discuss a problem, learning takes place. As you can see, your job as an emergency program manager may involve a lot of instruction, but in a very informal way. There may be times when you will actually be teaching your audience something you have learned at one of the seminars you have attended.

Prepackaged Programs: Often videotapes, movies or slide presentations are available on various topics that might be of interest to those associated with your emergency management program. FEMA publishes a catalogue of motion pictures useful for community education. The American Red Cross, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Department of Agriculture also provide a variety of useful training and education films.

Seminars: A seminar is a special kind of meeting or group instruction in which experts or key individuals are used as

resource people to inform the group. With a seminar, your primary function is to organize the seminar and have experts carry on the instruction for you.

Exercises: You learned earlier that the preparedness plan should be tested and also that many state offices will help you in carrying out a simulated emergency. These simulations, whether a "table top" exercise or one which is actually acted out, are learning experiences developed by you for a variety of participants.

As you can see, your job as an educator or trainer does not mean that you are standing in front of a class and giving a lecture. In your normal day-to-day routine as an emergency program manager, you will often be educating someone about emergency management or training them to perform some skill.

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