

THE REGIONAL EMERGENCY COORDINATION PLAN AT WORK



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

*partners
in
preparedness*

September 2001–December 2003

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By: Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

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By: Scott K. York, Chair

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Director of EMA

CITY OF MANASSAS

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By: Marvin Gillum, Mayor

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By: Judith F. Davis, Mayor

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By: Katherine K. Hanley, Chair

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By: Douglas M. Duncan, Co. Executive

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Title: Chief of Police

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Daniel E. Gardner 2/16/03
By: Daniel E. Gardner, Mayor

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By: Jack Johnson, Co. Executive

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By: David ...
Title: Director, DDOT

CITY OF BOWIE

G. Frederick Robinson
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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH *

By: Michael ...
Title: Director

A MESSAGE FROM
COG'S EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



As a region, we have come a long way since September 11, 2001.

Only a few days following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) moved quickly to lend its full support to the task of strengthening preparedness, coordination, communication and response in the National Capital Region. The region as a whole—local, state and federal government, and the critical private sector, all stepped forward in ways that could scarcely be imagined prior to September 11.

COG's executive director at the time, Michael Rogers, pledged that COG would re-direct existing resources and seek new resources to support its member local governments and state, federal and private sector partners in meeting this challenge. Then COG Board of Directors Chair Carol Schwartz established a task force to oversee this effort, and COG set out an ambitious agenda—centered on a work program of regional emergency planning, strengthened communication support, critical infrastructure assessment, and exercises and training.

Much of COG's work from October 2001 through September 2003 was supported by a special federal appropriation of \$5 million and overseen by the task force and several key committees and work groups. COG committed to chronicle this work in a summary report that would be made available to its members and partners. This report is a fulfillment of that pledge.

COG's traditional role as convener and facilitator served this effort well. The Regional Emergency Coordination Plan we have today is a major step forward in emergency preparedness and a signature achievement for the region.

A big table was set for this effort, and the plan is the result of true consensus—a painstaking but important process. As this report shows, it is a working plan that has proved its effectiveness in numerous ways and continues to evolve. One of the most significant effects of the process and the plan is how it has created new relationships between stakeholders and strengthened existing ones.

The Council of Governments has grown, too. COG's mantra—the idea that we can make great progress by working together as one region—now has deeper meaning. COG's members and stakeholders have pledged to remain vigilant for this great and vibrant region that is our home.

We can all be proud of the work that has been done, and we have profound appreciation for the work that remains. Going forward, we have a true partnership for progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David J. Robertson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

David J. Robertson
Executive Director
June 2004

A MESSAGE FROM
THE COG CHAIR



This report is the fulfillment of a commitment to develop a Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP). Yet it also is much more than that. With this summary, the region's elected officials and our partners in the private and non-profit sectors begin a more challenging task, which is to remain vigilant and ready to handle any emergency that might threaten citizens of the National Capital Region.

While the region has not faced another terrorist attack since 2001, we have used the plan to manage emergencies including Hurricane Isabel and the sniper incident. Our pledge is to maintain a state of readiness through training and exercises, to constantly reexamine the RECP, and to be ready to make improvements.

These tasks require that elected officials and public administrators across the region remain dedicated to this work. Just as importantly, those officials must call on the leadership and creativity they use when addressing other difficult challenges. They will work through the National Capital Emergency Preparedness Council and the Senior Policy Group, both of which are comprised of officials from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. The Council and the Policy Group will work in partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of National Capital Region Coordination.

I am proud of what we have achieved. This document is the culmination of an extraordinary process that met the most fundamental need of our governments and our region — to ensure the ability to protect our citizens during times of emergency. As a result of that process, I believe we have become a better region and part of a stronger democracy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Phil Mendelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue rectangular background.

Phil Mendelson
Chair, COG Board of Directors

A MESSAGE FROM
THE EPC CHAIR



When the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 occurred, I was serving as Chair of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), and was therefore confronted with the need to respond to the tragedy that gripped our region and the nation. The story of the development of the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) is a chronicle of the hard work and the intense care that COG, the region's elected officials and our many partners and stakeholder groups devoted to the development of the RECP.

In developing the plan, COG was transformed into an organization that would serve the region in more ways than previously imagined. The skill of the planning agency was critical as COG and its partners dedicated themselves to developing a living plan that would provide the region with the kind of vigilance it needed — and deserved. We became the resource with the ability to draw the region together.

According to the National Association of Regional Councils, the National Capital Region was the first region in the country to prepare a comprehensive emergency plan after the attacks. We know that much better decisions will be made during emergencies now that those decisions can be developed in a regional context with real-time, critical information. We also regard the RECP as a living document, not one

that will gather dust on a shelf. The plan will continue to be subject to frequent and rigorous testing and evaluation.

Although we will always mourn those who were lost as a result of the attacks, we recognize that the event forced us to prepare for a new and more dangerous era.

We can now continue to go forward together with confidence, ever-watchful and better prepared.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Schwartz".

Carol Schwartz

Chair

National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council

Member-at-Large

Council of the District of Columbia

development

A REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Is the Washington metropolitan region better prepared today for a terrorist attack or an emergency than we were on September 11, 2001? The answer is—unequivocally—yes.

Today, the region's first responders have more resources, better equipment and training. A state of the art communications and coordination system is in place and has performed well in all types of hazards. The relationships between local, state and federal governments are deeper and stronger than they have ever been. A regional strategy and governance structure are in place to ensure that homeland security is organized for the long term.

This progress flows from the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECPSM), developed by the member jurisdictions of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), in partnership with local, state, federal and private sector organizations and the nonprofit community. It is an unprecedented effort to improve regional decision-making concerning emergency management and response, by strengthening regional communication and coordination in the event of a regional incident, disaster or emergency.

At the heart of the RECP is the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCSSM). RICCS is a 24/7 communications capability that enables the region's leaders to share information and coordinate decisions within minutes of any event.

The RECP is a signature achievement for

the region in many ways.

It is a first. The National Capital Region is the first region in the country to have such a coordination plan, now considered a model by the National Association of Regional Councils.

It is comprehensive. The RECP is an all-hazards plan, addressing a broad spectrum of potential emergencies, from tornadoes to terrorism.

It is inclusive. COG's member jurisdictions and stakeholders recognized from the start that effective regional coordination goes beyond the individual roles of its participating local governments, and that emergency management involves more than just public safety organizations. The RECP involves federal, state and local governments, businesses, transportation and health entities, utilities, educators, and volunteer groups. From the United States Department of Homeland Security to the local hospital association, everyone has a stake and a role.

It is working. A lot has happened since September 11, and the use of the plan continuously demonstrates its effectiveness. For example, the regional coordination that took place to prepare the region for Hurricane Isabel helped save lives. Day after day, RECP partners were talking with each other. They were able to make decisions with better information; information was shared with key decision-makers; resources were made available to manage the situation; and there was a common message to the public.

Thanks to the regional planning efforts, the federal government has recognized the importance of working with and through the region. When the U.S. Department of

Homeland Security (DHS) was established, a special office was created for the National Capital Region.

The regional planning effort also paved the way for the DHS Urban Area Homeland Security strategy for the National Capital Region, and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). UASI provides funding for regional preparedness and includes a mechanism for measuring all local funding requests against the regional strategic plan and the Eight Commitments to Action identified by the Summit between the governors of Maryland and Virginia along with the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

Today, a National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC) has replaced the ad hoc task force that developed the RECP. The COG Board of Directors established the EPC to ensure continued progress in regional coordination. The EPC also serves as the Urban Area Working Group for DHS' homeland security initiatives and coordinates the development and administration of UASI program elements.

This report provides information on the process, the plan, the partnership, and the progress that has been made since September 11, 2001. Taken together, these efforts are paying dividends beyond emergency preparedness. There are much stronger relationships at all levels, and fostering cooperation will benefit the region well into the future.

It is truly a partnership for progress.



The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is a regional organization of local government elected officials, and area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures and the United States Congress representing districts in the metropolitan Washington area.

COG's 19 participating local jurisdictions are:

- District of Columbia
- Alexandria, Virginia
- Bowie, Maryland
- Arlington County, Virginia
- College Park, Maryland
- Fairfax, Virginia
- Frederick County, Maryland
- Fairfax County, Virginia
- Gaithersburg, Maryland
- Falls Church, Virginia
- Greenbelt, Maryland
- Loudoun County, Virginia
- Montgomery County, Maryland
- Manassas, Virginia
- Prince George's County, Maryland
- Manassas Park, Virginia
- Rockville, Maryland
- Prince William County, Virginia
- Takoma Park, Maryland

Since 1957, COG has served as a venue for regional collaboration on a wide range of public policy issues, such as transportation, environment, public safety, human services, planning and development. COG is an independent, non-profit association, supported by financial contributions from local governments, federal and state grants and contracts, and donations from foundations and the private sector. Policies are set by the full membership acting through its board of directors, which meets monthly.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 September 11 demonstrated the fragile nature of our region’s security. Our first responders were heroic, responding rapidly and very professionally to the attack on the Pentagon. Our citizens showed enormous courage and strength. Federal and local resources were mobilized and integrated, and available assets and teams used effectively.

The regional coordination plans, processes and mutual aid agreements that had been developed under COG’s auspices served us well on September 11. The mutual aid and support system for local police and firefighters is one of COG’s oldest programs. It allowed first responders to cross jurisdictional lines in an organized fashion to help one another.

Nonetheless, there were serious gaps in

communication between federal, state and local officials. Fifty different agencies responded to the attack, resulting in about 900 radio users. Many of the responding police and fire officials used different kinds of radios to communicate, making communication at the scene of the attack difficult. The need for interoperable communication went well beyond equipment.

The lack of coordination between jurisdictions and agencies led to massive gridlock on the roads. The Office of Personnel Management released 180,000 federal employees while at the same time the Secret Service had cordoned off streets around the White House, State Department and Capitol Hill. When workers headed home toward Maryland and Virginia, they found two of the major thoroughfares into and out of Washington, D.C. — the 14th Street Bridge and the Roosevelt Bridge — closed for portions of the day.

At the direction of Anthony Griffin, Chair

of COG’s Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) Committee and County Executive in Fairfax County, COG contacted local officials from around the region and sponsored a conference call that helped them reach a joint decision to close most of the area’s schools and many of its offices the next day. The decision eased the minds of many families and underscored the critical importance of regional communication to safety and security.

But the conference call did not take place until 6 p.m. that day, more than ten hours after American Airlines Flight 75 crashed into the Pentagon. The region did not have the capacity or protocol to get the appropriate leaders on a call quickly.

Meanwhile, the public was anxious for accurate information, as news and rumors spread quickly. There was no procedure in place to share accurate information with the region’s leaders instantly, or to disseminate appropriate messages to the public.

TIMELINE

2001

September 11

World Trade Center and Pentagon attacked

6pm – COG Chief Administrative Officers Conference Call

All airports closed in National Capital Region

September 25

Special COG Board Meeting— Proposes Task Force on Homeland Security for the National Capital Area; Approves resolution urging reopening of Reagan National Airport

October 4

Reagan National Airport re-opens with tightened security procedures and flight limitations

October 8

Federal Office of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council established



“On September 11, 2001, many of us lost friends, family members and loved ones. On that same day, we also witnessed or heard about incredible acts of heroism. We honor the memory of those who died by dedicating ourselves to ensuring that our region is as prepared as possible to meet any future challenges. The efforts of the Council of Governments in this process since September 11 have been exemplary.”

– ANTHONY WILLIAMS, MAYOR OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



October 21	October 24	November 7	November 20	December 5	December 6
First trace of anthrax found in Brentwood postal facility	First Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security	Second Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security	Third Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security	COG Workshop Develops 50 Recommendations for enhancing security for National Capital Region	Fourth Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security



THE VISION

On September 11, it was painfully clear that security on our home soil could no longer be taken for granted.

In the National Capital Region, the stakes are especially high. It is the nation's capital, home of the President, the Supreme Court, the executive departments of government, Congress, the Defense Department, Pentagon and many national treasures. More than four and a half million people call this region home.

Communication coordination and emergency preparedness are complex, given the number of federal, state, local and private sector entities and tasks involved. COG had already done a lot to bring the region together

on tough issues over the years, but nothing would be as challenging as restoring our sense of security after September 11, and ensuring that the region was better prepared to handle whatever emergencies might arise in the future.

Carol Schwartz, 2001 Chair, and its Board of Directors, proposed the creation of a Task Force on Homeland Security, and recognized the need for a plan that would eliminate the communication and coordination problems revealed by the attack on the Pentagon.

At the same time, COG members were urging the Administration to re-open Reagan National Airport as soon as possible while meeting security concerns. The airport,

closed on September 11, is a key component of the area's travel, tourism and business industry. When it closed, 11,000 employees were directly affected and the jobs of 70,000 workers in related businesses placed in jeopardy. The airlines operating at National also suffered serious losses. The airport re-opened on October 4, with heightened security procedures and some flight limitations.

As the region struggled to recover, federal leaders vowed that the Pentagon would be repaired in one year. COG's Task Force was also determined to complete its work in a relatively short time frame.

“When regional jurisdictions work together under the guidance of a plan such as the RECP, roles and relationships among the member jurisdictions as they relate to regional communication, coordination and information sharing are very clear. The jurisdictions in the National Capital Region are much better prepared to respond to any emergency or incident as a result of our efforts to collaborate as a region.”

— JACQUELINE F. BROWN, PH.D., CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

2002

January 4

Fifth Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security

January 9

COG Board adopts 50 security recommendations and RICCS framework

January 10

Congress approves \$5 million earmark for COG for regional emergency planning, communication, exercises and training

January 24

Sixth Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security

February 2002

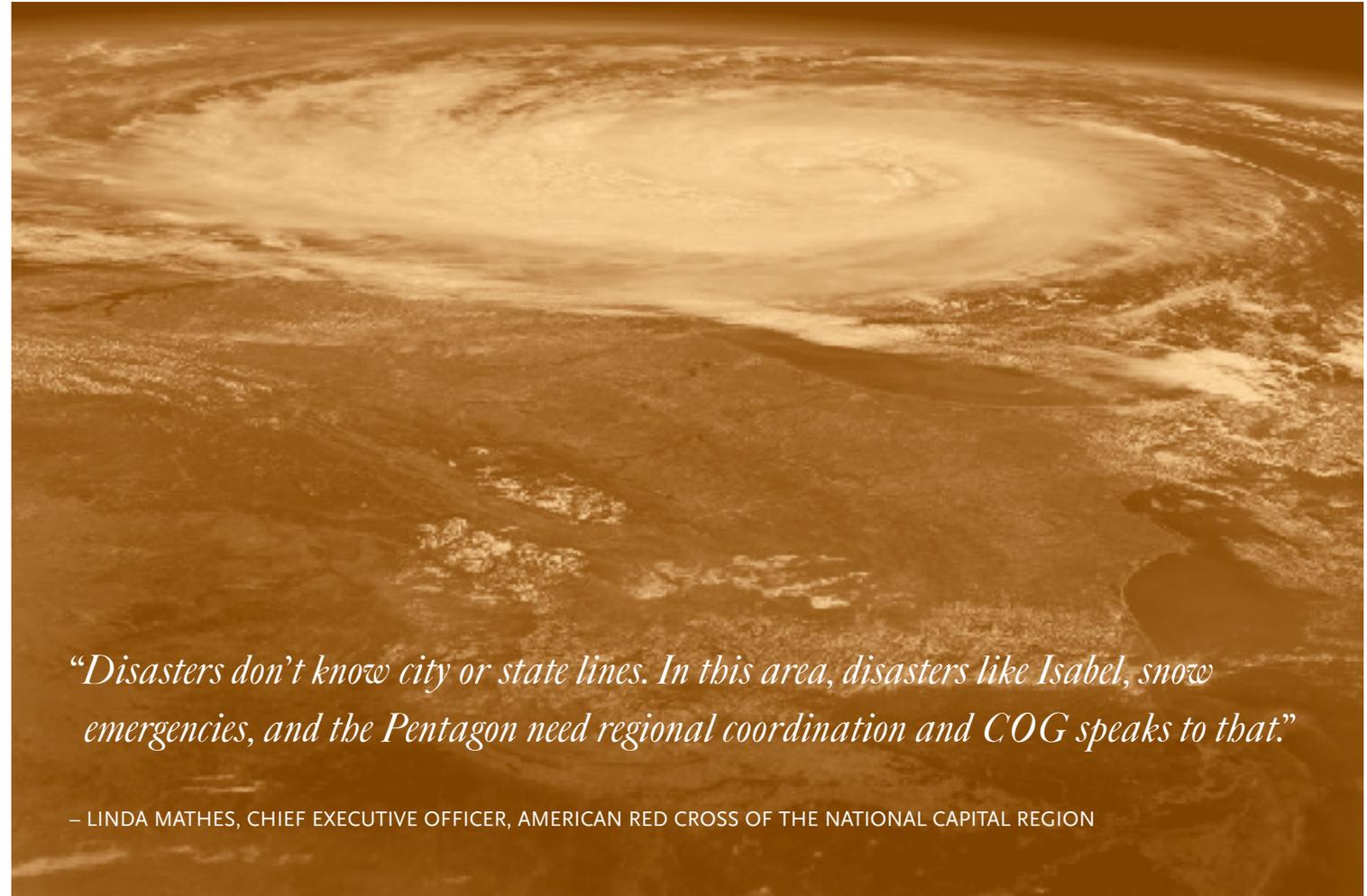
RICCS system put into place



A BIG TABLE

The challenge ahead was unlike any that COG had ever faced. It called for a fundamental shift in the way the region's interests were viewed. Thus, the first decision — a pivotal one — was to set a big table, recognizing that emergency preparedness in the region involved all COG member jurisdictions, and many other public and private entities.

Participants included: elected officials from COG's Board of Directors; Chairs of COG's Police, Fire, Health, and Transportation Committees; the then-federal Office of Homeland Security in the Executive Office of the President; the Federal Emergency Management Agency; the State of Maryland Emergency Management Agency; the Virginia Department of Emergency Management; the District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency; the Greater Washington Board of Trade and the Potomac Conference; the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); water and wastewater, electric and other public utilities; solid waste managers; schools and universities; medical institutions; community associations; and volunteer organizations.



“Disasters don’t know city or state lines. In this area, disasters like Isabel, snow emergencies, and the Pentagon need regional coordination and COG speaks to that.”

— LINDA MATHES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AMERICAN RED CROSS OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

March 7

Seventh Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security

March 28

Eighth Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security

April 10

COG Board approves Regional Emergency Coordination Plan Framework

May 16

Ninth Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security

May 30

Tenth Meeting of COG's Task Force on Homeland Security

June 5

COG Familiarization Workshop

“Beginning September 11, we can no longer claim that it was not within our power to anticipate the worst. This is our job now. To anticipate events that were previously untinkable. Planning, preparing and practicing are where COG has invested its energy.”

– BRUCE WILLIAMS, MAYOR PRO TEM, TAKOMA PARK, COG BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIR 2002



SUPPORTING THE EFFORT

The Washington Regional Association of Grant Makers (WRAG) was one of the first organizations to understand the importance of the COG effort and to offer support. WRAG pledged a \$75,000 grant that helped COG attract pledges of support of another \$100,000 from the private sector. The combined grants helped convince the federal government that COG’s role was critical to regional and national security.

As a result, COG received \$5 million in

federal funds to address regional emergency preparedness, including communications, vulnerability threat assessment, regional training and community outreach. This included \$1.5 million for the development of the RECP; \$500,000 for a plan for improved emergency communications; \$500,000 for a vulnerability threat assessment tool; and \$2.5 million for training, exercises and community outreach. The FY 2003 Appropriations Act provided another \$1 million in funding for continued planning

and development of the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS).

Overall, Congress in 2001 appropriated more than \$300 million for the District, Northern Virginia and Suburban Maryland jurisdictions and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to improve emergency preparedness and purchase equipment.

July 30

Eleventh Meeting of COG’s Task Force on Homeland Security

August 5

National Capital Region Summit – 8 Commitments to Action Adopted – Director Ridge, Mayor Williams, Governor Glendening, Governor Warner

August 22

Twelfth Meeting of COG’s Task Force on Homeland Security

September 11

COG Board approves Regional Emergency Coordination Plan (RECP) for the National Capital Region

October 2

Sniper Attacks Begin



“Emergency management is not just the public safety organizations. A major benefit of this process has been to broaden the focus of what emergency management is and what it takes to respond on behalf of our communities and our region.”

– ANTHONY GRIFFIN, COUNTY EXECUTIVE, FAIRFAX COUNTY

October 10

Thirteenth Meeting of COG’s Task Force on Homeland Security

October 23

Sniper Attacks End

October 29–30

Regional Leaders Seminar

November 13

COG Establishes National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC)

December 16

Final Meeting of COG Task Force on Homeland Security

“The cooperation we received from all involved—individually and collectively—has been excellent. We started at the end of September of 2001 with a room full of people who shared a tremendous sense of urgency after September 11th. As the months and years have worn on, interestingly, people’s commitment has remained strong.”

– DC COUNCIL MEMBER CAROL SCHWARTZ
TASK FORCE CHAIR
COG BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIR 2001
EPC CHAIR 2004

THE PROCESS

COG’s Task Force on Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness began work immediately. The plan would have to improve coordination of emergency responses; as well as to address equipment needs and gaps in policies, procedures, and laws.

As the COG Task Force meetings got underway, the U.S. government established the federal Office of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Council.

COG not only recognized the need to fully involve federal officials, but also to align its plan with the structure the federal government uses to address emergencies. As a result, the Task Force worked closely with then-U.S. Homeland Security Advisor Tom Ridge, and the emergency management directors in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia. Each section of the RECP corresponds to a similar Emergency Support Function (ESF) section in the structure used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and state

emergency management agencies. The RECP also includes several customized sections and annexes reflecting the uniqueness of the National Capital Region.

COG was also careful to devise the RECP as an all-hazards emergency coordination plan that can be used during emergencies such as hurricanes, tornadoes, snowstorms, major transportation incidents, power outages, as well as terrorist threats and events.

The task force was organized in six major functional areas:

- Transportation
- Health
- Communications
- Solid Waste/ Debris Management
- Public Safety
- Energy/Water Supply

The committees of the task force included representatives from all sectors in the functional area.

2003

January 24

U.S. Department of Homeland Security is formed, Office for National Capital Region Coordination created

February 15–17

Massive snowstorm shuts down region

March 6

First Meeting of EPC

March 19

Iraq War Begins, Threat Level Raised to Orange

April 3

Second Meeting of EPC

April 22

RECP receives unanimous endorsement from area local governments

June 5

Third Meeting of EPC

By December 2001, COG’s working groups had developed 50 recommendations for enhancing security for the National Capital Region. The Board officially adopted the recommendations in early January 2002.

In February 2002, the RICCS was in place. This represented a major step forward in the region’s ability to communicate and coordinate in the event of an emergency. The first 24/7 RICCS Host Center was established in the District of Columbia’s Emergency Management Agency Emergency Communications Center (ECC). There were plans for additional RICCS Host Centers in other locations around the region.

By March of 2002, when then-COG Executive Director Michael Rogers testified before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for the District of Columbia, the working groups had held more than 40 coordination meetings. The framework for the plan had been drafted, and a “Readiness Capability Assessment” was underway in each

of the COG jurisdictions. COG had also taken the first steps toward a comprehensive training and exercise plan.

A month later, the COG Board approved the Framework for the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan. The Task Force worked diligently through the spring and summer to complete the plan.

In June, COG convened a “Familiarization Workshop” for over 300 stakeholders to learn about the RECP, the RICCS, as well as local, state, and federal emergency response plans.

In early August, Homeland Security Advisor Tom Ridge held a National Capital Area Regional Summit, with District of Columbia Mayor Anthony Williams, Virginia Governor Mark Warner, and then-Maryland Governor Parris Glendening. They developed and adopted Eight Commitments to Action, including a commitment to regional decision-making and coordination, and enhancing mutual aid agreements — reinforcing the importance of the work already well underway at COG.

The COG Board unanimously approved the RECP on September 11, 2002. Soon COG jurisdictions formally endorsed the plan and signed a Memorandum of Understanding, making the RECP the foundation for emergency response in the National Capital Region.

“Not only is the plan a model, but the work of the group is a model of cooperation, common understanding and rallying to the cause. Of all of the things COG stands for, this is the highest model.”

– SUPERVISOR MARY K. HILL
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA
COG BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIR 2003





THE PLAN

The RECP covers the scope, roles and relationships of the member organizations as they relate to regional communication, coordination and information sharing.

The RICCS, a system that facilitates regional communication and coordination of decision-making, is the centerpiece of the plan. It uses state-of-the-art teleconferencing, e-mailing, and paging systems to ensure seamless communications among key officials in the event of an emergency.

The plan identifies 15 specific Regional Emergency Support Functions (R-ESFs), generally modeled after the functional structure of FEMA's Federal Response Plan.

For each R-ESF, the plan identifies the entities that might be involved in an emergency response. It also details the plans and procedures for information sharing and response coordination.

A regional emergency may require the involvement of one or more support functions. The RECP, therefore, takes into account a number of support functions, or annexes. These annexes are for specific subject areas, such as credentialing, pharmaceutical stockpiling, emergency transportation, animal protection, and water supply.

The plan is a tool that can be and has been used in the event of a regional incident or emergency.

If an incident takes place in a single jurisdiction, the responding entity will review the situation and may request regional notification through the RICCS if the situation is judged to be of regional concern. Through the RICCS, key decision-makers, subject matter experts and support function (R-ESF) members will be notified.

The entire RECP is available online at www.mwcog.org.



TRANSPORTATION

R-ESF#1 focuses on disruptions of the regional transportation system, whether they occur directly as transportation incidents or by emergencies in other functional areas.

Transportation Emergency Support Function participants include COG and the Transportation Planning Board, the U.S. Department of Transportation, all D.C., Maryland, and Virginia transportation authorities, local transit providers, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the National Park Service, Amtrak, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and other federal agencies as needed, including FEMA, and other R-ESFs.

A regional emergency evacuation transportation coordination plan has been developed as an annex to the RECPSM. It focuses on moving people out of the affected area(s) as well as moving required resources into the area.

While COG is responsible for coordinating the transportation planning aspects of emergency preparedness and response, member jurisdictions and the states are responsible for the operation and execution of plans. They will coordinate to the greatest extent possible with federal agencies.



COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

This function focuses on the hardware and capacity for interoperability. It supports the regional response efforts during and after a potential or actual emergency. It supports the RICCSSM, and other forms of communication among R-ESF members. Communications within jurisdictions remain the responsibility of each jurisdiction.

R-ESF#2 participants include all local government jurisdictions, state communications organizations such as the Chief Technology Officer of the District of Columbia, federal entities such as FEMA, private sector communications organizations, such as cellular service providers and regional agencies including COG, WMATA, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

Tools include the Washington Area Warning Alert System (WAWAS), the Capital Wireless Integrated Network (CAPWIN), and digital wireless radio communication systems. A wide variety of communications devices are also used to facilitate emergency communications, including text messaging, pagers, Government Emergency Telecommunications Service landlines, and high frequency radio networks.

The plan recognizes that during emergencies, when the need for communication is greatest, capacity may be affected. All surviving communications assets will be utilized to ensure a proper response to the needs of victims.



PUBLIC WORKS AND ENGINEERING

This function concerns the regional water supply, wastewater, and solid waste and debris management. It covers disruptions that have regional impacts, temporary restoration of services, and public health and safety issues.

R-ESF #3 includes local public works departments, state departments of health and environmental quality, federal organizations such as the Army Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard, independent sewer and water authorities, private sector solid waste and debris removal entities and regional coordinating organizations including COG, the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

Jurisdictions agree to respect existing contractual agreements for solid waste management so there will not be competition for resources already under contract to another jurisdiction. Existing regional agreements, such as the Potomac River Low Flow allocation agreement and the COG 2002 Water Supply Emergency Plan, will be implemented as designed for regional incidents and regional emergencies affecting water supply.

This function requires a great degree of coordination with other functions, for example, coordination of water supplies for firefighting (R-ESF# 4) and for health officials (R-ESF#8).



FIRE, TECHNICAL RESCUE, AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OPERATIONS

This R-ESF coordinates with FEMA's support functions: #4 Firefighting, #9 Urban Search and Rescue, and #10 Hazardous Materials. Major activities include fire containment and suppression, evacuation of hazard areas, emergency medical services, hazmat response, and limited technical rescue.

It includes local and regional jurisdictions, state firefighting and emergency medical services, federal agencies such as Andrews Air Force Base Fire Department, the U.S. Fire Administration, and regional coordinating organizations such as COG.

The Incident Command System is the organizational structure used during a response. The Incident Commander or the lead jurisdiction will determine the level of notification required. The RECPSM establishes protocols for notification and coordination.

It establishes three levels of notification and coordination, depending on whether more than one region or other R-ESF activities are involved. Like other R-ESFs, it establishes essential elements of information, and provides for training and preparedness exercises.



INFORMATION AND PLANNING

5

During regional emergencies, R-ESF #5 becomes the information and planning element of the regional communication and coordination effort. Every support function has a liaison to R-ESF #5.

Situations with potential or actual regional impacts will activate this function. The RICCSSM will be used to facilitate the information collection and sharing process.

R-ESF #5's primary responsibility resides with the local and state emergency management community, which has ECCs operating on a 24-hour, 7-day a week basis. The District of Columbia serves as the primary RICCSSM host center. Redundant capability has been established in Maryland and Virginia.



MASS CARE

6

This function focuses on mass care assistance to victims affected by a public emergency, including weapons of mass destruction. It includes regional, state, and local entities as well as private organizations such as the American Red Cross, Greater DC Cares, private food service providers, and federal agencies.

Initial responses will focus on meeting urgent needs that could include shelter, food, first aid, water, and other medical needs. R-ESF #6 also supports establishing and maintaining systems to distribute disaster relief supplies and to identify and report victim status.



RESOURCE SUPPORT

7

This function provides a framework for meeting needs for required resources. It includes regional and multi-jurisdictional agencies, regional and local authorities, schools, and state and federal agencies.

In addition to sharing existing resources in an emergency situation, this function also supports cooperative purchasing of resources. The use of R-ESF #7 involves notifying COG's Chief Purchasing Officers Committee through the RICCSSM.

The planning aspects of this function include making a comprehensive assessment of existing resources. Plans will be evaluated on a semi-annual basis. Resource management exercises will be conducted in conjunction with other R-ESF exercises.



HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND MEDICAL SERVICES

8

One of the most extensive networks of potential respondents is in R-ESF #8: Health, Mental Health, and Medical Services. This function includes a vast array of state, local, and federal public health services as well as private sector organizations such as hospitals, social workers, and the American Red Cross. It is organized under the leadership of the COG Health Officials Committee, which includes the health departments of the District, Maryland, Virginia, Alexandria, and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Frederick, Loudoun, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Prince William.

In a bio-event, the initial case is reported by the hospital or practitioner to the local health department, which then notifies the COG Health Officials Committee. Subject matter and type of incident will drive the participation in the RICCSSM conference call. Many other types of incidents, such as chemical, nuclear, or natural hazards, may drive the participation of health officials in an emergency response in coordination with other support functions. The RESF #8 coordination plan describes four levels of risk assessment, the highest being a confirmed bioterrorist attack.





TECHNICAL RESCUE

9



HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

10

Both of these are incorporated into R-ESF #4: Fire, Technical Rescue, and Hazardous Materials Operations.



FOOD

11

This function focuses on the procurement, storage, transportation, and distribution of food supplies in emergency situations. It works in coordination with R-ESF #6: Mass Care, as well as R-ESF #15: Donations and Volunteer Management.

In addition to the official state, local, federal, and regional entities involved, this function includes volunteer organizations and private sector groups like the Greater Washington Board of Trade.



ENERGY

12

Energy ensures an effective response to emergencies that affect the regional energy infrastructure including the supply and delivery of electricity, natural gas and petroleum fuels.

Participants in R-ESF #12 include local jurisdictions, state government energy agencies, federal agencies, energy regulatory commissions, and private sector energy organizations such as Baltimore Gas & Electric, PEPCO, Washington Gas, and the Mid Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association, with regional coordination support provided by COG.

R-ESF #12 serves as the emergency management component of the Comprehensive Regional Energy Plan currently being developed by the Energy Policy Advisory Committee, representing all COG member jurisdictions as well as the U.S. Department of Energy, the General Services Administration, and the utilities.



LAW ENFORCEMENT

13

All state, local, and federal law enforcement entities are represented in this function. The Incident Command System will be the organizational structure used during a response for the coordination of police services.

Three levels of communication are identified in this section. Level 1 covers local incidents within the capability of the primary responding jurisdiction. Level 2 encompasses incidents that involve more than one jurisdiction or impact other R-ESFs. Level 3 incidents require interagency operations beyond the scope of existing mutual aid agreements.

Participating agencies will use the RICCSSM to share information, tap into other R-ESFs, and coordinate communications.



MEDIA RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

14

The goal of this function is to provide accurate, authoritative, and timely regional information to news media. It focuses on coordination among all RECP participating agencies and organization public information officers. It's mission is to provide information to the public through the media, employers, schools, universities, and community organizations guided by the philosophy of "common message, one voice."

R-ESF #14 policy directs the RICCSSM public information officer (PIO) to proactively interact with the media to provide critical information. It establishes best and worst case scenarios for disseminating information and protocols for establishing the lead PIO for an event.



DONATIONS AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

15

This function focuses on ensuring that donations of goods and services are coordinated in anticipation of, during, and after a regional event. It involves private and volunteer organizations in addition to government entities. There will be close coordination with the Mass Care and Food functions, and other R-ESFs, as dictated by the event.

Port Function

“By far the most important real change was the implementation of the RICCS, which has been used extensively, providing standard procedures understood by all CAOs which can be rapidly implemented whenever needed.”

– RON CARLEE, COUNTY MANAGER, ARLINGTON COUNTY



RICCS

The RICCS is a tool that provides, on a 24/7 basis, a system for officials participating in emergency support functions and key decision-makers to be notified of incidents and to share information. RICCS is a tool that can bring together experts as necessary to assess the situation, to coordinate decision-making, and to create common messages for the public.

The primary focus of the communication and coordination through RICCS is on regional impacts away from the incident site related to mobility, public health, and public safety.

The RICCS uses multiple means to reach appropriate officials, including telephone, cellular phone, digital radio cellular phone, two-way radio, Blackberry personal digital assistants, pager, e-mail, or other means as necessary.

Immediate Messaging: The RICCS is also used on a regular basis to share information about developing situations. Decision-makers receive messages on a range of subjects, primarily emanating from the District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency “RICCS Host Center”, which monitors the region on a 24/7 basis. This ensures that our leaders have up to date, accurate information on breaking news situations.

Conference Calls: A conference call of regional decision-makers can be convened based on the request of any or all of the following (subject to internal agency procedures):

- The local responding Emergency Communication Center
- State Emergency Management Agency Director/Emergency Operations Center

- Department of Homeland Security (Office of the National Capital Region Coordination)
- The affected jurisdiction’s Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- The CAO of another regional jurisdiction
- COG’s Executive Director or designees

The notified parties would then be asked to join a conference call at a specified time shortly after the notification. The capacity now exists to convene such a call within 30 minutes of an incident.

Capacity also exists to convene an intra-RESF call, so that members of more than one function can confer with each other and share information.



After Action Report: COG facilitates an after-action critique among the participants involved in the regional incident or emergency. These reports help determine whether additional steps should be taken to improve regional preparedness.

The District of Columbia's Emergency Management Agency was the first officially designated RICCS Host Center, and it is currently the primary RICCS Host Center for the region. Additional RICCS Host Centers have been designated in Montgomery County, Fairfax County, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. There are back up servers and power sources ensuring redundancy of the system. COG is regularly exploring additional technologies so that the system remains state of the art. The Chief Administrative Officers, in collaboration with the state emergency management directors, have oversight responsibility for the RICCS.

NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REGION

Historically, the federal government has dealt with states, which in turn provided direction to individual localities. The goodwill that was generated and the achievements that were realized in developing the RECP laid the foundation for a new and strong relationship between the federal government and the National Capital Region, now institutionalized with a formal structure and a new guiding strategy for working together into the future.

The federal government was represented in the COG RECP planning process from the start. When, in late 2002, COG's Board decided to transform the ad hoc task force on homeland security into a National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (EPC), federal representatives were again included. The EPC ensures that homeland security efforts are organized for the long haul.

The President's National Strategy for Homeland Security recognized the vital role that state and local governments have to play in public safety. While there had been significant efforts just after September 11 to prepare individual jurisdictions, the new approach called for a comprehensive and coordinated regional focus.

Today, there is an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) based on these efforts. It provides grants for planning, training, exercises and equipment for regional utility. The UASI is one of the few instances in which Congress has appropriated funding to address these needs on a regional basis. The District of Columbia, in the role of State Administrative Agent, administers the grants on behalf of the National Capital Region. Requests for funding are evaluated by representatives of the federal, state and District governments, the EPC, and COG's Chief Administrative Officers committee. Jointly, they measure the requests against a regional needs assessment and strategic plan.

COG's role as a secretariat is codified with responsibility for planning support under the UASI.



“During the time of the sniper, everyone worked together, their actions crossed jurisdictional lines, yet to the public it seemed seamless. That tested our local networking, systems, and agreements and was a prime example of how an all-hazards system would work at times other than a major national disaster.”

– JIM ESTEPP, FORMER PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER
FORMER CHAIR COG PUBLIC SAFETY WORK GROUP

A LIVING PLAN

The utility of the RECP has been apparent on many occasions since September 11. The plan has been put to the test and used successfully.

The RICCS was instrumental during the October 2002 sniper shootings, the February 2003 snowstorm, Hurricane Isabel, and has been used to notify officials of other events with potential regional impacts, such as a demonstration in downtown Washington, a threatened suicide jump from the Wilson Bridge and failures of wastewater treatment plants outside the Washington region that could potentially affect our water supply.

In early October 2002, the rhythm of every day life changed sharply when a sniper began to terrorize the region, striking in a wide range of locations in Virginia, Maryland and the District. The RICCS system was essential to the coordination of communication during these tense weeks. The RICCS was used to notify and convene key decision-makers during this time for weekly and sometimes daily conference calls. Law enforcement officials, school superintendents, business leaders, and Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) were brought together to discuss the movement of people and children during a very uncertain time to ensure public safety and protection. Should schools close? Should after hours

activities be curtailed? What about traffic delays during police roadblocks? All of these issues were discussed and information shared via the RICCS.

The snowstorm of February 2003 tested the region once again. Officially, 16.7 inches of snow fell at Reagan National Airport, making it Washington’s 5th greatest storm on record. Dulles Airport recorded 22.1 inches—its third greatest amount. And at BWI, an incredible 28.2 inches fell, breaking the all-time record set during the Knickerbocker storm of 1922. The National Capital Region, and much of the East Coast, was shut down.

The RECP proved helpful in planning before, during and after the storm. The storm also inspired a new effort to improve snow emergency planning and response. A snow plan task force was established, and developed a new snow emergency assessment system, protocol and terminology. The plan was practiced at a workshop at George Washington University’s Loudoun County campus in October 2003 and finalized in November 2003.

The planning and coordination that took place when Hurricane Isabel threatened the region is a case study in how well the RECP is working. It’s clear, officials said afterward, that lives were saved because of the steps that were taken in preparation for the storm.

LIVES WERE SAVED



September 18–19, 2003—Forecasters had their eyes on Isabel, a fierce hurricane in the Atlantic that reached a category 5 in early September. It made landfall in eastern North Carolina as a category 2 hurricane on September 18. Isabel wreaked havoc along the coast, and was headed straight for the Washington region. Regional preparations began well in advance as the region braced for the storm. Decisions coordinated through the use of the RECP are credited with helping save lives. Actions such as closing the public transportation system, schools, and government offices kept people out of harm’s way when the storm hit.

The RICCS was essential to the successful preparation and handling of the effects of Hurricane Isabel. Before, during and after the storm, from September 15–21, there were 119 RICCS emergency alert notifications, and 19 decision-maker and individual R-ESF conference calls including the Chief Administrative Officers, transportation, energy, schools, and media relations.

Before the storm, officials from member jurisdictions and key stakeholders worked together to share the steps they were taking to prepare for the harsh weather, and how they were going to handle school and office closings. The most important RICCS call was late in the afternoon of Wednesday, September 17. The National Weather Service joined the call with regional CAOs, emergency management directors, federal officials, school superintendents and WMATA.

The weather service advised that the storm would hit with winds of 40 mph or greater by 1 or 2 p.m. the next day.

Based on the best practices of other subway systems, WMATA advised that it would not be safe to operate the system with winds that powerful. The communication made possible by RICCS was critical in determining how best to proceed. Conference call participants had to factor in the interaction of WMATA and the local suburban feeder systems and

Governments, schools and businesses also coordinated their actions. Each made their own decision, but they did so with full knowledge of what others were doing and why. This led to consistent and coordinated decisions across the region. The federal and local governments closed, as did school systems, and the public was advised to stay home.

This information was shared broadly, so the public was well informed and could plan accordingly.

“The Washington region got it right [during Isabel]. The region should be proud of how far we’ve come.”

— JOHN HAGER, FORMER LT. GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA AND VICE CHAIR, EPC

buses. Together, they looked at when it would no longer be safe for people to be on the street, took into account the Metrorail schedule and feeder systems, and when people would actually arrive at their final destinations. Based on the regional conference call’s coordinated decisions concerning closure of government and schools, the Metrorail system was closed to new riders at 11 a.m. so that everyone would be able to complete their journeys on feeder systems by 1 p.m., and get home before the worst weather conditions hit the area. The overarching concern was that public safety would be enhanced if people stayed in the safety of their homes.

Although Isabel was downgraded to a tropical storm by the time it actually hit the region, it still caused major flooding, downed trees, and extensive power outages. Federal disaster declarations were issued for the District of Columbia, and most of Maryland and Virginia.

The RICCS calls continued through the weekend. Jurisdictions were able to discuss schools and office closings, review the damage, identify shelter locations, and share information on how they were coping with the effects of the storm.

There were no deaths resulting primarily from the storm. Planning for Isabel clearly helped save lives.

“Having this workshop was a fantastic networking opportunity for me, and it was a forum where I could touch base with colleagues, not only within my field of public health, but across other areas and agencies.”

– FAMILIARIZATION WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT
JUNE 5–6, 2002

TRAINING AND TESTING

COG has held a wide range of workshops, training sessions and exercises to ensure that regional stakeholders are familiar with the RECP, fully trained, and receive the best preparation possible for all manner of potential incidents and emergencies. COG staff also participated in numerous trainings and workshops organized at the federal, state and local levels. Some of the most notable include:

Regional Leaders Seminar • October 29-30, 2002

More than four hundred people took part in this two-day seminar focused on the testing and implementation of the RECP and using the RICCS. The event was co-sponsored by COG, local and state emergency managers and the Board of Trade, and was led by advisors to two Governors, D.C.’s Mayor and FEMA.

The seminar was designed to build and strengthen relationships among the participants, and provide a deeper examination of the potential issues arising in each function in the event of simultaneous terrorist incidents

in multiple jurisdictions. The tabletop exercise was based on a natural disaster — a hurricane — coupled with sudden terrorist incidents.

The Washington Post described a hypothetical emergency scenario that involved a series of bombings at various locations in the region and went on to say:

“Here’s the good news: Local officials will have already thought about it. Last week a wide range of them, from Maryland, Virginia, the District and the federal government, took part in a role-playing, war-game scenario similar to the one described above. Fire-fighters, police officers, civil servants, utility officials and others acted out their parts, trying to identify what the bottlenecks would be, trying to decide whom they would contact first. It was the largest regional homeland security exercise to date, and it may have been the largest to take place in the country.”

Four themes arose during the seminar:

- Real time information drives decisions.
- Coordination between R-ESFs is critical.
- Building relationships among jurisdictions and across R-ESFs facilitates communications during disaster response and recovery efforts.
- Developing a common message is vital to maintaining public confidence in the response.

The Washington Post noted that the seminar’s high attendance both days showed that regional cooperation was beginning to lead to tangible action among the COG jurisdictions

and the states of Maryland and Virginia.

Familiarization Workshop • June 5-6, 2002

COG held a two-day workshop to familiarize participants with the communications and planning foundation for regional emergencies. The session attracted more than 250 representatives from federal, state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, and business. Experts led panel discussions covering what happened at the Pentagon on September 11; mutual aid; local emergency preparedness; biological and chemical incidents; and terrorism. Overall, participants agreed that the workshop was an effective forum to increase understanding of regional inter-relationships and communication.

Crisis Planning Workshop • March 21, 2002

COG co-sponsored a crisis planning workshop with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Potomac Conference. CSIS assembled a team of security experts for a hands-on crisis scenario exercise.

The Israeli Experience • February 5, 2002

Some of the leaders in Israel’s security efforts provided an overview of practical terror prevention policies and activities in use in Israel today. The seminar described various large scale and local approaches with an emphasis on practicality and cost effectiveness.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is essential to effective emergency response, so improving communication on many levels has been a central tenet of planning efforts. COG's real strength is in facilitating communication between decision-makers, and coordination of messages to the public. This combination of need and ability is proving to be a powerful force in closing communication gaps.

The RECP and EPC address four major components of communications, including communication among mutual aid partners—emergency managers and support functions; among government, private and nonprofit decision-makers; with the media, the public and community at large; and, among first responders.

The heart of the region's new ability to communicate and coordinate in the event of emergencies is the RICCS—a 24/7 system that enables emergency managers and key decision-makers to be notified of events, share information, coordinate decisions and create common messages for the public.

Public information is as vital to the region as the interoperability between first responders. The region's public information officers (PIOs) must translate complex information into readily understandable messages, and to disseminate timely and accurate messages to the media and to the public. R-ESF 14 involves the PIOs who must deliver these messages to the media and the public. The

RECP's theme of "common message, many voices" is achieved through their work.

The forty PIOs who are directly involved in R-ESF 14 have been trained in the use of the RICCS. There are targeted trainings for the region's top communicators, such as crisis communications workshops held in early 2004.

Representatives of R-ESF 14 participate in the CAO calls. PIOs may have their own calls to review situations and discuss how best to disseminate messages.

R-ESF 2 deals with communications infrastructure—i.e., hardware and capacity.

A major task within this function has been to address regional connectivity and interoperability.

A report on the September 11th response by the Public Safety Wireless Network (PSWN) found that the initial responders did not have difficulty establishing communications on the scene. However, as the number of state and federal agencies increased at the Pentagon site, there was no means of direct interoperability for these 'second responders.' The report also found that no inventory list of interoperability assets (mobile command vehicles, radios) existed for the area. Nor had the level of interoperability necessary to support effective public safety operations been defined.

The RECP begins to address all of these issues. Through a series of meetings with first responders and communication system

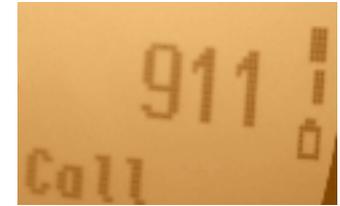
providers, an inventory of communication solutions that would be available to the region in the event of an incident of regional impact was compiled. A thorough gap analysis was completed and communications gaps are being closed. Addressing interoperability among the many communications systems has been a regional priority.

The region has also expanded the number of connections to the Washington Area Warning Alert System (WAWAS), part of a national system which allows local, state and federal emergency communication centers and operations centers to communicate with each other on dedicated circuits.

Through Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant funding, the region is purchasing a cache of 800 megahertz radios to address interoperable communications.

CAPWIN (Capital Wireless Integrated Network), a three year partnership test project between the District, Maryland and Virginia is underway. CAPWIN will develop an integrated transportation and public safety data and voice communications system.

Participants in R-ESF 2 have examined a wide range of emerging communication technologies and are continually working to identify technologies that can be of regional utility. At the same time, the UASI has established a review process by which requests for regional funds for equipment purchases can be measured against the region's strategic plan.



HEALTH

There are many significant benefits of the RECP in the health arena.

The RECP recognizes that, in many respects, health workers are first responders. It has also brought about an important new involvement by state health departments in regional planning. There is a greater awareness that what happens in one jurisdiction may affect a wider community, and of the need to share information before a problem is fully diagnosed. The health section of the RECP addresses health, mental health and medical services, and incorporates public health services as well as private sector organizations such as hospitals, medical societies and the Red Cross.

An important element of the region's emergency planning was in place just days before September 11. COG's regional bioterrorism taskforce had developed a planning guide for the region on how to deal with the threat. The region's health care providers and health officials used the plan to communicate with each other and share critical information during the anthrax attacks in the Washington region. The health officers considered their preparation extremely valuable and a foundation for additional action.

One of the greatest accomplishments in the health arena, and of the RECP overall, is the disease surveillance system. Termed "syndromic surveillance," it is a system that examines symptoms as they come up, rather than waiting for a disease diagnosis. Things

such as what kinds of drugs are being purchased, absences from school or work and the prevalence of certain symptoms are tracked. Health officers can spot patterns, and share information with health officers from other jurisdictions. This is especially critical in our area, where so many people live in one jurisdiction and work in another. Funding from the federal Urban Area Security Initiative will make it possible to advance the system with new electronic technology.

There has also been considerable regional coordination with the Strategic National Stockpile, a federal supply of medications and medical supplies available in the event of a large infectious disease outbreak or other public health outbreak, including a bioterrorism attack. The stockpile includes twelve "push-packages" at strategic, undisclosed locations around the country, which can be delivered within twelve hours of federal approval of a request from a governor. Health officers have received planning guidance on the Stockpile, and some have participated in Stockpile exercises such as one held in Fairfax County in October 2003.

Health officers are working intensively on 'surge' response—starting with defining gaps in our ability to respond to large scale health situations. The surge plan will identify ways to fill those gaps, and incorporate and connect the many plans already in place in our region while ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the information.

The RECP has also enabled health officers

to share and coordinate resources. For example, in one instance, Spanish speaking nurses from one jurisdiction were able to assist in a mobile health clinic in another jurisdiction, where the immediate need was greatest.

Within the health officials' team, an education and training advisory team is working with the Response to Emergencies and Disasters Institute (READI) at George Washington and George Mason Universities, Johns Hopkins' School of Public Health, and George Washington University Center for Excellence in Municipal Management to ensure that local managers receive accurate health-related information.

A subcommittee on bioterrorism is working to take the planning guide to the next level.

There is also more attention to mental health issues as part of emergency preparedness. More Emergency Operations Centers include a mental health expert, and more attention is being paid to the mental health of first responders, victims and the general public than ever before.

Taken together, all of these actions provide a foundation for better public health practices and a stronger health infrastructure that will serve our region well in all circumstances.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is closely intertwined with nearly every other aspect of homeland security and regional emergency preparedness. It is the aspect of many emergencies affecting the largest number of people, and one of the symptoms of emergencies most recognized by the public.

The RECP provides a transportation strategy for any kind of emergency. It involves local, regional, state and federal departments of transportation and transit agencies; and collaboration with emergency management, law enforcement, and federal agencies including the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA. It recognizes the critical roles that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, other regional transit agencies, and the state and local departments of transportation of D.C., Maryland, and Virginia play in managing the impacts of regional emergencies. It describes how these agencies will contact one another in emergencies, conduct conference calls, and will shoulder the duties of information collection and exchange on transportation system conditions (e.g., is a road open or closed) and actions (e.g., rerouting of buses, retiming of traffic signals).

Coordination is not new to the region's transportation agencies. Before September 11, for example, the Maryland Coordinated

Highway Action Response Team (CHART) and the Virginia Smart Traffic Center were working together to detect and clear roadway incidents quickly. Transportation agencies were also working through the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at COG to develop collaborative approaches to day-to-day regional transportation management.

The Transportation Work Group has met actively and continuously since its formation in late 2001. The meetings, planning, workshops, and exercises undertaken by this work group have helped hone a greater level of emergency preparedness among the participating transportation agencies, and a greater level of coordination between transportation and related activities in emergency management, law enforcement, and public outreach. The work group has considered issues such as a total closure of the Metrorail system for an extended period of time; weather events; potential terrorist events; and post-event examinations of emergencies that have occurred in the region, such as Hurricane Isabel.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the emergency transportation planning process has been to address the complicated, interrelated issues of evacuation and associated protective actions such as sheltering in place. The U.S. Department

of Homeland Security has outlined a set of four categories of protective actions response related to evacuations: sheltering in place, selective evacuation, staged or phased release evacuation, and full evacuation.

Since capacities on the transportation system are by definition limited, and already overwhelmed during everyday rush hours, the system must be managed to the extent possible both on the systems side (e.g., timing signals and bus routing) and on the demand side (e.g., encouraging people who are not in harm's way to stay where they are, freeing capacity for those in danger and for emergency responders).

There has also been considerable regional coordination through COG regarding the individual emergency transportation and evacuation planning activities of the region's transit and transportation agencies. The District of Columbia Department of Transportation has created a District Response Plan, components of which have been coordinated with efforts at COG. Both Maryland and Virginia's Departments of Transportation have addressed routings in their jurisdictions, both in conjunction with the D.C. plan.

There also has been an active level of coordination with the Regional Transit Operators Emergency Preparedness Task Force at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit





Authority. The transit community has been particularly strong in its leadership in regional emergency transportation coordination, because of the importance to transit of timely communications among the many interrelated transit systems in the region: Metro, MARC, Virginia Railway Express, and suburban bus transit providers; transit's need for information on roadway closures; and the impact of emergency decision-making on transit operations.

Identifying the point at which an everyday incident grows into a regional incident requiring conferencing remains a challenge. Transportation personnel who likely are extremely busy responding to aspects of an incident are also depended upon to shoulder the burden of inter-agency information sharing. Transportation incidents are relatively frequent. This necessitates continuing to work to strengthen emergency communications and coordination among transportation agencies for monitoring and sharing incident information, and for assisting in informing the public. The region is continuing to explore strengthening these capabilities through enhanced operations procedures, technical upgrades and systems integration, and examination of the potential effectiveness and cost of organizing a dedicated regional transportation information staff or entity.

MUTUAL AID

COG has traditionally initiated and maintained mutual aid agreements, which are legal, structural, operational, and financial procedures by which one jurisdiction can help another. There are 21 existing regional agreements, varying from police assistance to traffic control on the Wilson Bridge.

While the region has grown and changed rapidly, there has not been a new mutual aid agreement or substantive amendment in the last decade.

The lack of a new mutual aid agreement has not prevented first responders from doing what must be done to save lives in an emergency. Day in and day out, police officers and firefighters cross district and state lines to assist other jurisdictions. But their actions are constrained by outdated mutual aid agreements. They have no formal mechanism for reimbursement or addressing liability. So they act at their own risk, and put their own jurisdictions' resources at risk as well.

Developing protocols for these situations would be simpler if they could be made with new mutual aid agreements. The need for new agreements became even more evident after September 11, the sniper shootings, and preparations for the World Bank protests.

It may appear to be a relatively simple task, but D.C., Maryland and Virginia have very different approaches to the three major issues in a mutual aid agreement: third party liability, indemnification, and reimbursement. That's why local governments have been

working for many years to arrive at a new mutual aid agreement.

Third party liability refers to who is liable when, for example, firefighters from one jurisdiction assist in a neighboring jurisdiction, and a third party is injured. It is hard to resolve the liability issue because Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. have different approaches to sovereign immunity—the concept that you cannot sue the government unless the government says you can. Virginia has a strict approach, Maryland a limited one, and D.C. does not generally recognize a sovereign immunity.

In the context of mutual aid, indemnification refers to how the party who requests assistance compensates an assisting party when it suffers a loss as a result of providing assistance. Firefighters crossing county lines, for example, could incur property damage, overtime pay, disability, even loss of life. Is the requesting jurisdiction liable?

The third major legal hurdle is reimbursement. Who pays, and for what expenses, when mutual aid is provided?

In 2002, COG convened its 18 jurisdictions' attorneys along with the states' attorneys general and representatives from the federal Office of Homeland Security. Working with emergency management officers, they have drafted a proposed federal statute that will pave the way for adoption of new and effective mutual aid pacts.

Today, the region is very close to realizing the goal of a new and encompassing mutual aid agreement. The draft statute has the approval or endorsement of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, Office of Management and Budget and the Secret Service, as well as the state of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the COG Board of Directors and attorneys for COG's 19 municipalities and jurisdictions.

“Each jurisdiction has its own police force, its own fire department and public health structure, as well as privately owned hospitals, physicians and health care providers with their own way of doing things. We want an arrangement so all these entities can respond together. There are a lot of pieces to this.”

– ROBERT MALSON, CHAIRMAN OF COG'S BIOTERRORISM TASK FORCE
VICE CHAIR, EPC

BUSINESS

The private sector controls eighty percent of the infrastructure required in emergency response and recovery. A vast majority of the area's workers are employed by the private sector. The private sector also makes the equipment and provides many of the services on which the region relies. For these reasons, no plan would be fully effective without the active participation of the private sector.

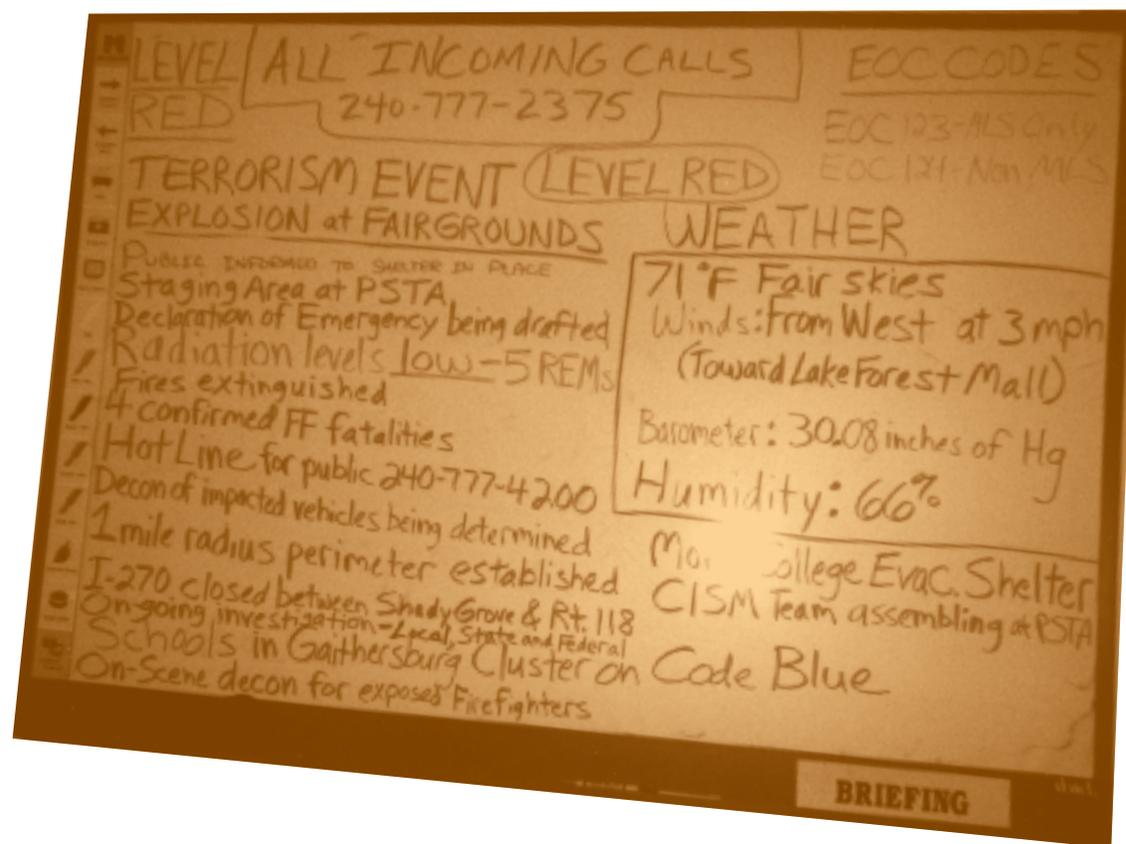
The region's business community has been at the table from the start — participating in the development of the RECP, and now an important member in the EPC.

Representatives of the business community participate in RICCS conference calls. Through the Greater Washington Board of Trade, they communicate with 1,400 of the region's businesses about emergency situations and actions. There is also, for the first time, participation by the private sector in the emergency operations centers to enhance the ability of businesses and volunteer groups to assist in an emergency.

In recognition of its critical role, the private sector has received a portion of UASI funds to develop assessment tools for business and non-profit readiness. To ensure the safety of workers, the business community is conducting employee drills and instruction, making plans to provide emergency care and support, and to restart businesses quickly after an emergency shutdown.

“We are significantly more coordinated than we were two years ago. All the players are beginning to trust one another, a barrier that existed when we started and hampered real progress. Private sector support is needed for effective response and recovery. We are an effective conduit to communicate with the 80% of the region who work in the private sector.”

— BOB PECK, GREATER WASHINGTON BOARD OF TRADE



COMMUNITY SERVICES

The non-profit world plays several important roles in disaster relief—immediate support to victims, such as housing, clothing, and food, as well as long-term relief, such as providing financial assistance, mental and physical health care, and education to victims.

The non-profit sector in the Washington region was essential to the recovery from the September 11 attack on the Pentagon. On September 11, community service organizations worked tirelessly to provide assistance to those who lost jobs and needed relief, but in many cases those in need were not able to find information on available assistance or connect with the appropriate groups. One lesson learned from that incident was that it is important that people volunteer before an emergency, to receive training and understand their role in an emergency.

Community organizations such as the Salvation Army, American Red Cross, and other non-profit service providers (generally known as VOADS, or Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) are actively working to coordinate their efforts, with a focus on four key areas:

- Common victim intake preparation, backed by the smart use of technology and used by private and public agencies alike.

- Shared databases of available resources and victim and family unification information.
- Pre-trained staff.
- Anticipating victim needs with agreements with major corporations to help provide relief.

Washington area non-profits demonstrated their immensely important role before, during and after Hurricane Isabel. Before the storm, non-profit service providers such as the American Red Cross began to mobilize supplies and emergency assistance. During the storm, these organizations were active by providing shelter to the homeless, and staffing a hotline to answer questions about the hurricane and emergency assistance. After the storm, non-profits were essential to the region's recovery by feeding and sheltering residents who had been evacuated or displaced, and coordinating volunteers to assist in emergency response efforts.

Non-profit community groups are advocating for a regional 211 hotline, to connect callers with community services and volunteer opportunities. It would make it easier for those who want to help and volunteer, and serve as a single source for updated community outreach and volunteer information.

“The experience of working together on preparedness can be a model for how the government, business, and non-profit sectors can work together to address issues of regional concern. We have a document that can serve as a backbone for all of our efforts in the non-profits, public and government sectors.”

– CHARLES BEAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NON-PROFIT ROUNDTABLE OF GREATER WASHINGTON

“Together with business and government, non-profits serve as the third leg of the stool that a great many of us rely on in time of need. Now is the time to make sure all three legs of the stool are as strong and connected as we need them to be.”

– GEORGE VRADENBURG, POTOMAC CONFERENCE



American Red Cross

“We have demonstrated that we have a tremendous capacity in this region—a capacity of creativity, a capacity of technology that can be brought to bear on the security issues we need to deal with while not impinging on our desire for economic growth.”

— BRUCE ROMER, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Washington area’s public and private infrastructure is vital to everyday life and commerce, and it’s also a matter of national security.

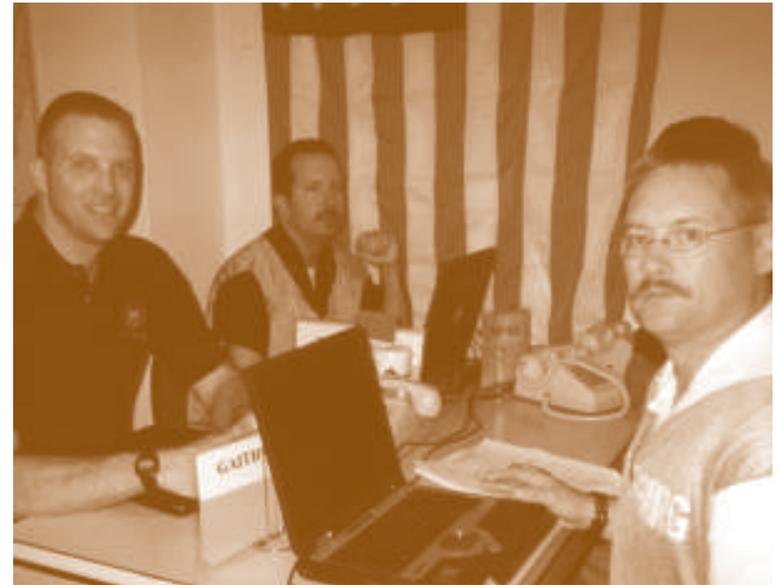
Our region’s transportation, energy, water and sanitation facilities, and telecommunications systems support the Nation’s capital and critical national agencies. The evaluation and protection of public-use infrastructure became an even higher priority after September 11.

COG’s status report on infrastructure security represents one of several steps in making the region more ‘disaster-resistant.’ It builds upon the infrastructure related aspects of the RECP, by focusing on local state and national programs designed

to protect and ensure rapid recovery of the infrastructure.

Many infrastructure providers in the region has undertaken security improvements since September 11. Most of them have turned to national industry associations and experts for guidance and best practices. Action has been swift, including training seminars, retrofitting, new technology, and new security procedures.

The federal government plays an important role in this effort. For example, the Federal Transit Administration provides construction and planning grants. The new Transportation Security Administration deals with aviation security at our three regional airports. Federal law enforcement agencies have created task forces to deal with infrastructure security.



progress

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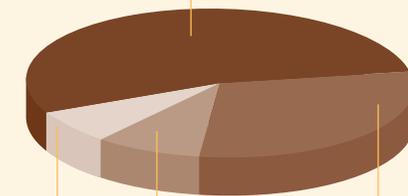
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Approved Work Program Budget: \$5 Million

Exercises and Training
\$2,500,000



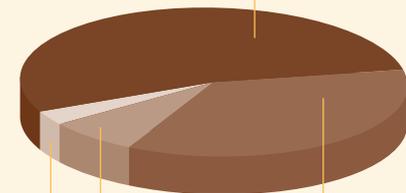
Critical Infrastructure
Assessment
\$500,000

Communications
Support
\$500,000

Regional
Emergency
Planning
\$1,500,000

Work Program Expenditures (As of Sept. 30, 2003)

Consultants and Special
Technical Support
\$2,691,000



Other
Direct
Costs
\$372,000

Professional and
Administrative
Personnel and
Indirect Costs
\$1,784,000

Unobligated Balance
\$153,000

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“In this region in particular, had there not been a COG, we would have had to create one. This region was fortunate that it had a body that had the kind of relationships established ahead of time so that when 9/11 did happen, they were able to hit the ground running.”

– MIKE BYRNE, THEN DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION COORDINATION,
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.



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