
Challenge Your Understanding

The following questions are designed to challenge your understanding of the material presented in this chapter. Some questions may require additional research outside this book in order to provide a complete answer.

1. How does terrorism uniquely distinguish the crime of assault?
2. Why does al Qaeda remain a terrorist threat after Osama bin Laden's death?
3. Looking at the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, which short-term goal do you think most effective? Explain.
4. Looking at the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, which long-term goal do you think most effective? Explain.
5. According to PDD-39/HSPD-5, what is the counterterrorism role of the FBI?
6. According to HSPD-5, what is the counterterrorism role of DHS?
7. How did the USA PATRIOT Act improve the FBI's ability to investigate terrorism?
8. What is the primary means for dealing with known terrorists, foreign or domestic?
9. Describe two options available to the President if foreign governments are unwilling or unable to render unto justice terrorist elements within their country that threaten the United States.
10. As the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, what circumstances might move you to recommend CIA paramilitary forces over DoD special forces to perform a particular overseas counterterrorism mission?

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Learning Outcomes

Careful study of this chapter will help a student do the following:

- Explain the responsibility of State Governors to their citizens.
- Explain why 9/11 raised concern about State and Local emergency preparedness.
- Describe Stafford Act authorities to grant Federal disaster assistance to States.
- Describe the FEMA process and means for delivering assistance to States.
- Describe the considerable means available to States for responding to emergencies.
- Evaluate the Incident Commander's role and means for directing emergency response.
- Evaluate the role of exercises for improving emergency preparedness.

“We must prepare to minimize the damage and recover from any future terrorist attacks that may occur despite our best efforts at prevention.”

- 2002 National Strategy for Homeland Security

Introduction

9/11 forced the realization that the nation was unprepared to respond to a WMD attack. While FEMA had been established in 1979 to streamline Federal support to natural disasters, it had no corresponding capabilities to integrate Federal support to manmade catastrophes. Moreover, the contrast between the local response at the World Trade Center and the local response at the Pentagon on 9/11 proved that the structured integration of responding agencies through the Incident Command System saved lives. Accordingly, the Department of Homeland Security was commissioned by Congress to begin strengthening the response capabilities of the nation, and make sure they were integrated from the bottom-up through the Local, State, and Federal levels of government.

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Integrating the Federal Response

Following 9/11, the President and Congress sought to improve the nation’s ability to respond and recover to domestic catastrophic attack. Of particular concern was the potential employment of WMD. In 2002, few parts of the country had the ability to respond to a WMD attack. Even the best prepared states and localities didn’t have adequate resources to respond to the full range of potential threats exposed by 9/11. Many did not have in place mutual aid agreements to facilitate cooperation with their neighbors in time of emergency. The Federal government had done relatively little to remedy the situation. What few domestic preparedness programs that existed were spread across eight different Federal departments and agencies, and provided money under a tangled web of grant programs. Accordingly, one of the first objectives for the new Department of Homeland Security was to create a fully integrated national emergency response system capable of dealing with most any catastrophe, both natural and manmade. [1, p. 42]

The first order of business was consolidation. The 2002 Homeland Security Act authorized the establishment of an Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate within the new Department of Homeland Security. [2] The new directorate incorporated the Strategic National Stockpile and National Disaster Medical System from Health and Human Services, the Nuclear Incident Response Team from the Department of Energy, and the Domestic Emergency Support Teams from the Department of Justice. [3] The Homeland Security Act also allowed the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be incorporated as an independent agency under the new directorate. With FEMA came the authority to distribute grants under the Homeland Security Grant Program. [2]

After consolidation, the next order of business was establishing clear lines of responsibility and authority. On February 28, 2003, HSPD-5 was issued making the Secretary of Homeland Security the Principal Federal Official (PFO) for domestic incident management. It was the Secretary's responsibility to see that executive agencies were prepared to respond and to coordinate their response when Federal assistance was needed in a disaster. HSPD-5 also directed the Secretary to develop a National Response Plan (NRP) detailing how the Federal government would marshal its resources for a disaster, and a National Incident Management System (NIMS) detailing how those resources would be integrated into a local disaster response. [4]

The NIMS provides a standard command and management structure for coordinating a multi-agency response to disaster. Much of NIMS is built upon the Incident Command System (ICS), which was developed by Federal, State, and local wildland fire agencies during the 1970s. ICS is a management system designed to enable effective incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organizational structure. [5, pp. 48-49] To facilitate coordination between Federal, State, and Local agencies responding to a disaster, HSPD-5 mandated NIMS for all Federal agencies starting in 2003, and made it a prerequisite for State and Local governments to receive Homeland Security Grant Program funds starting in 2005. [4]

The Homeland Security Act mandated the creation of a National Response Plan to replace the previous Federal Response Plan. [2] HSPD-5 assigned the task to the DHS Secretary and provided further guidance on its preparation. [4] The subsequent NRP was released in December 2004. It was a large document comprised of some 426 pages. It provided the basic plan how the Federal government would prepare and respond to disaster at the request of State and Local government. The underlying principle of the plan was that Federal capabilities would be packaged into fifteen Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). Various Federal agencies were assigned responsibility for preparing, maintaining, and providing these ESF capabilities when requested. The Secretary of Homeland Security, under the authority of HSDP-5, was responsible for seeing that the ESFs were ready and available when needed. [6, p. xi] Because it was so big, the problem with the NRP was that few people were familiar with it, let alone had read it by the time Hurricane Katrina struck in August 2005. The flawed response to Hurricane Katrina was attributed, in part, to a failure to follow the NRP. Congress acted by passing the 2006 Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act which elevated FEMA to report directly to the Secretary, and mandated changes to the NRP. [7, pp. CRS-3-CRS-4] As a result, in January 2008, DHS issued the National Response Framework (NRF) which remains the nation's plan for responding to disaster.

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Requesting Federal Assistance

Federal disaster assistance is provided upon request of the State Governor. Such a request is made under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 93-288, as amended, hereinafter “the Stafford Act”). To request Federal assistance, the Governor must declare either a State emergency or major disaster. Emergency declarations are made to protect property and public health and safety and to lessen or avert the threat of a major disaster or catastrophe. Emergency declarations are often made when a threat is recognized (such as emergency declarations for hurricanes which may be made prior to landfall) and are intended to supplement and coordinate local and state efforts prior to the event. Emergency declarations are also made to provide direct federal assistance to protect lives and property. This aids activities such as evacuations and the protection of public assets. In contrast, a major disaster declaration is made as a result of the disaster or catastrophic event and constitutes a broader authority that helps states and local communities, as well as families and individuals, respond and recover from the damage caused by the event. [8, pp. ii-1]

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Ordinarily, only a Governor can initiate a request for a Presidential emergency or major disaster declaration. In extraordinary circumstances, the President may unilaterally declare a major disaster or emergency. This request is made through the FEMA Regional Administrator and based on a finding that the disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments, and that Federal assistance is necessary. [5, p. 41]

The completed request, addressed to the President, is submitted through the FEMA Regional Administrator, who evaluates the damage and requirements for Federal assistance and makes a recommendation to the FEMA Administrator. The FEMA Administrator, acting through the Secretary of Homeland Security, may then recommend a course of action to the President. [5, p. 42] If the Governor’s request is accepted, the President, in turn, will issue a corresponding declaration of emergency or major disaster. This Presidential declaration triggers the release of funds from the President’s Disaster Relief Fund, managed by FEMA under the Stafford Act. The Presidential declaration will also activate disaster aid programs from other Federal departments and agencies. A Presidential major disaster declaration triggers long-term Federal recovery programs, some of which are matched by State programs, and designed to help disaster victims, businesses, and public entities. An emergency declaration is more limited in scope and without the long-term Federal recovery programs of a major disaster declaration. Generally, Federal assistance and funding are provided to meet a specific emergency need or to help prevent a major disaster from occurring. [5, pp. 40-42]

In many cases, assistance may be obtained from the Federal Government without a Presidential declaration. For example, FEMA places liaisons in State EOCs and moves commodities near incident sites that may require Federal assistance prior to a Presidential declaration. Additionally, some types of assistance, such as Fire Management Assistance Grants – which provide support to States experiencing severe wildfires – are performed by Federal departments or agencies under their own authorities and do not require Presidential approval. Finally, Federal departments and agencies may provide immediate lifesaving assistance to States under their own statutory authorities without a formal Presidential declaration. [5, p. 42]

Responding Federal departments and agencies respect the sovereignty and responsibilities of local, tribal, and State governments while rendering assistance. The intention of the Federal Government in these situations is not to command the response, but rather to support the affected local, tribal, and/or State governments. [5, p. 40]

NRF Response

The DHS National Operations Center (NOC) serves as the national fusion center, collecting and synthesizing all-source information, including information from State fusion centers, across all-threats and all-hazards information covering the spectrum of homeland security partners. Federal departments and agencies report information regarding actual or potential incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response to the NOC. [5, p. 33]

When notified of a threat or an incident that potentially requires a coordinated Federal response, the NOC evaluates the information and notifies appropriate senior Federal officials and Federal operations centers: the FEMA National Response Coordination Center (NRCC), the FBI Strategic Information Operations Center (SIOC), the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and the National Military Command Center (NMCC). The NOC serves as the primary coordinating center for these and other operations centers. [5, p. 34]

After being notified, departments and agencies should:

- Identify and mobilize staff to fulfill their department's or agency's responsibilities, including identifying appropriate subject-matter experts and other staff to support department operations centers.

If the Governor's request is accepted, the President, in turn, will issue a corresponding declaration of emergency or major disaster. This Presidential declaration triggers the release of funds from the President's Disaster Relief Fund, managed by FEMA under the Stafford Act.

Once a Presidential declaration is issued, FEMA will establish a Joint Field Office (JFO) in proximity to the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), and send a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) to assist the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) with ordering Federal resources.

- Identify staff for deployment to the NOC, the NRCC, FEMA Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCCs), or other operations centers as needed, such as the FBI's Joint Operations Center. These organizations have standard procedures and call-down lists, and will notify department or agency points of contact if deployment is necessary.
- Identify staff that can be dispatched to the Joint Field Office (JFO), including Federal officials representing those departments and agencies with specific authorities, lead personnel for the JFO Sections (Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Administration and Finance) and the ESFs.
- Begin activating and staging Federal teams and other resources in support of the Federal response as requested by DHS or in accordance with department or agency authorities.
- Execute pre-scripted mission assignments and readiness contracts, as directed by DHS. [5, p. 36]

The FEMA Regional Administrator deploys a liaison to the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to provide technical assistance and also activates the Regional Response Coordination Center. Federal department and agency personnel, including Emergency Support Function primary and support agency personnel, staff the RRCC as required. The RRCCs:

- Coordinate initial regional and field activities.
- In coordination with State, tribal, and local officials, deploy regional teams to assess the impact of the event, gauge immediate State needs, and make preliminary arrangements to set up operational field facilities.
- Coordinate Federal support until a Joint Field Office (JFO) is established.
- Establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to provide a central point for coordinating emergency public information activities. [5, p. 44]

In coordination with the RRCC and the State, FEMA may deploy an Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT). IMATs are interagency teams composed of subject-matter experts and incident management professionals. IMAT personnel may be drawn from national or regional Federal department and agency staff according to established protocols. IMAT teams make preliminary arrangements to set up Federal field facilities and initiate establishment of the Joint Field Office. [5, p. 44]

Emergency Support Functions

FEMA coordinates response support from across the Federal Government and certain NGOs by calling up, as needed, one or more of fifteen Emergency Support Functions. The ESFs are coordinated by FEMA through its NRCC. During a response, ESFs are a critical mechanism to coordinate functional capabilities and resources provided by Federal departments and agencies, along with certain private-sector and nongovernmental organizations. They represent an effective way to bundle and funnel resources and capabilities to local, tribal, State, and other responders. These functions are coordinated by a single agency but may rely on several agencies that provide resources for each functional area. The mission of the ESFs is to provide the greatest possible access to capabilities of the Federal Government regardless of which agency has those capabilities.

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ESF #1 - Transportation

ESF #2 - Communications

ESF #3 - Public Works and Engineering

ESF #4 - Firefighting

ESF #5 - Emergency Management

ESF #6 - Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services

ESF #7 - Logistics Management and Resource Support

ESF #8 - Public Health and Medical Services

ESF #9 - Search and Rescue

ESF #10 - Oil and Hazardous Materials Response

ESF #11 - Agriculture and Natural Resources

ESF #12 - Energy

ESF #13 - Public Safety and Security

ESF #14 - Long-Term Community Recovery

ESF #15 - External Affairs [5, p. 57]

ESFs may be selectively activated for both Stafford Act and non-Stafford Act incidents under circumstances as defined in HSPD-5. Not all incidents requiring Federal support result in the activation of ESFs. FEMA can deploy assets and capabilities through ESFs into an area in anticipation of an approaching storm or event that is expected to cause a significant impact and result. This coordination through ESFs allows FEMA to position Federal support for a quick response, though actual assistance cannot normally be provided until the Governor requests and receives a Presidential major disaster or emergency declaration. Many States have also organized an ESF structure along this approach. [5, p. 57]

When ESFs are activated, they may have a headquarters, regional, and field presence. At FEMA headquarters, the ESFs support decision making and coordination of field operations within the NRCC. The ESFs deliver a broad range of technical support and other services at the regional level in the Regional Response Coordination Centers, and in the Joint Field Office and Incident Command Posts, as required by the incident. At all levels, FEMA issues mission assignments to obtain resources and capabilities from across the ESFs in support of the State. [5, p. 57]

All ESF support is directed to the local Incident Commander operating under the Incident Command System.

All ESF support is directed to the local Incident Commander operating under the Incident Command System. The incident command structure enables the ESFs to work collaboratively. For example, if a State requests assistance with a mass evacuation, the Joint Field Office would request personnel from ESF #1 (Transportation), ESF #6 (Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services), and ESF #8 (Public Health and Medical Services). These would then be integrated into a single branch or group within the ICS Operations Section to ensure effective coordination of evacuation services. [5, p. 57]

Bottom-Up Support

All disasters are local. Under the United States federal system of government, State, County, Municipal, and Tribal governments are responsible for the safety and security of the citizens within their jurisdiction. This separation of authorities is manifested in Article X of the Constitution, which stipulates that “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” From a more practical standpoint, local jurisdictions are best suited to respond to incidents by virtue of their proximity. Hence, the National Response Framework is a bottom-up system, designed to provide assistance only when State and Local resources have been overwhelmed or exhausted.

Most jurisdictions maintain sufficient capability to respond to most incidents. However, when an incident exceeds the capacity of the local jurisdiction, it may request assistance from a neighboring or higher jurisdiction. This determination typically originates with the on-scene Incident Commander (IC).

The Incident Commander is the individual responsible for all response activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and release of resources. The Incident Commander has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site. The Incident Commander directs incident response operations from an Incident Command Post (ICP). [5, p. 50]

If the Incident Commander determines that additional resources or capabilities are needed, he or she will contact the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and relay requirements to the local Emergency Manager (EM). Local EOCs are the physical locations where multiagency coordination occurs. EOCs help form a common operating picture of the incident, relieve on-scene command of the burden of external coordination, and secure additional resources. The core functions of an EOC include coordination, communications, resource allocation and tracking, and information collection, analysis, and dissemination. During an incident, the local Emergency Manager ensures the EOC is staffed to support the Incident Command Post and arranges needed resources. Resources may be provided in the form of Emergency Support Functions, similar to the NRF. The EOC also serves to update and advise elected or appointed officials so they may provide policy direction as needed to support the incident response. [5, pp. 50-51]

The EOC might request additional resources from neighboring jurisdictions through a Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA). An MAA is formed between neighboring jurisdictions specifying the conditions under which assistance will be provided, and the terms for remuneration. Because of the financial obligations involved with an MAA, the EOC might first have to consult with fiduciary officials before invoking such an agreement. Of course, time is most precious during an incident.

When multiple agencies become involved in the incident, as determined by the type of incident or by invoking an MAA, then the Incident Commander might form a Unified Command with other officials having legal authority over the responding assets. Operating from the Incident Command Post, the Unified Command will exercise direction and control over tactical operations through corresponding officials acting in concert from a single Incident Action Plan (IAP). Under a Unified Command, each participating agency retains its authority, responsibility and accountability for assigned assets. [5, p. 48]

If the incident is of such magnitude or complexity that it exceed Local response capacity, the EOC might have to defer to the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to request additional resources. In some cases, this might require the local elected official to issue a declaration of emergency or disaster to gain access to State funds or resources. The SEOC, in turn, might marshal resources under Mutual Aid Agreements with other jurisdictions or even direct the use of the National Guard. All responding assets report to the on-scene Incident Command Post and take direction according to the Incident Action Plan.

If the Incident Commander determines that additional resources are needed, he or she will contact the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and relay requirements to the local Emergency Manager (EM). In turn, the EOC might request additional resources from neighboring jurisdictions through a Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA).

If State resources prove insufficient to the task, the Governor might request assistance from neighboring states under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Under the terms of the EMAC, neighboring States can provide civilian resources and National Guard support under the direction of the local Incident Command Post. [5, p. 6]

If the incident exceeds Local response capacity, the EOC might defer to the State Emergency Operations Center to request additional resources. States can marshal resources under Mutual Aid Agreements with other jurisdictions or even direct the use of the National Guard. All responding assets report to the on-scene Incident Command Post (ICP) and take

If the combined resources of the States are insufficient, or additional funds or special capabilities are needed to contend with the incident, the Governor may appeal for Federal assistance. The Governor may appoint a State Coordinating Officer (SCO) to work with the local FEMA region official to prepare the corresponding declarations of emergency or major disaster to request Stafford Act support. Upon the recommendation of the FEMA Administrator and the Secretary of Homeland Security, the President will appoint a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) to deploy to the SEOC. [5, p. 67]

The FCO is a senior FEMA official trained, certified, and well experienced in emergency management, and specifically appointed to coordinate Federal support in the response to and recovery from emergencies and major disasters. The FCO executes Stafford Act authorities, including commitment of FEMA resources and the mission assignment of other Federal departments or agencies via ESFs. If a major disaster or emergency declaration covers a geographic area that spans all or parts of more than one State, the President may decide to appoint a single FCO for the entire incident, with other individuals as needed serving as Deputy FCOs. [5, p. 67]

In all cases, the FCO represents the FEMA Administrator in the field to discharge all FEMA responsibilities for the response and recovery efforts underway. For Stafford Act events, the FCO is the primary Federal representative with whom the SCO and other State, Tribal, and Local response officials interface to determine the most urgent needs and set objectives for an effective response. [5, p. 67]

Strengthening Local Response

In 2003, FEMA initiated the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) to strengthen State and Local response capabilities, particularly in regard to WMD and other terrorist incidents. It authorized purchase of specialized equipment to enhance State and Local agencies' capabilities in preventing and responding to WMD incidents and other terrorist incidents, and provided funds for protecting critical infrastructure of national importance. SHSGP provided funds for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating terrorism response exercises; developing and conducting counter-terrorism training programs; and updating and implementing each state's Homeland Security Strategy (SHSS). SHSGP funds could also be used to plan, design, develop, conduct, and evaluate exercises to train First Responders, and to assess the readiness

of State and Local jurisdictions to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. Exercises had to be threat- and performance-based, in accordance with FEMA's Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). [9, pp. CRS-4]

To help guide the incremental buildup of State and Local response capacity to WMD and terrorist incidents, in December 2003 the Bush Administration issued HSPD-8 directing DHS to develop a National Preparedness Goal (NPG) establishing preparedness objectives, measures, and priorities. In December 2005, DHS issued a draft National Preparedness Goal as follows:

"To achieve and sustain capabilities that enable the nation to collaborate in successfully preventing terrorist attacks on the homeland, and rapidly and effectively responding to and recovering from any terrorist attack, major disaster, or other emergency that does occur to minimize the impact on lives, property, and the economy. This state of national preparedness will be achieved by reaching risk-based target levels of capability, and sustained by measuring readiness and directing resources to areas of greatest risk and need." [10, pp. CRS-3]

To help attain the NPG, DHS began work on a National Preparedness System (NPS). The NPS began with identifying fifteen National Planning Scenarios providing examples of potential catastrophic incidents. From these fifteen incidents, DHS worked with Federal, State, and Local agencies to derive a Universal Task List (UTL). The UTL identifies the operations and tasks expected to be performed in order to respond to events similar to those set out in the National Planning Scenarios. The UTL was comprised of hundreds of individual tasks set across four mission areas: 1) prevent, 2) protect, 3) respond, and 4) recover. From the Universal Task List DHS then derived the Target Capability List (TCL). The TCL identifies thirty-six areas in which responding agencies would be expected to be proficient in order to meet the expectations set out in the UTL. The National Preparedness System also included the National Response Plan and National Incident Management System as the means for implementing these capabilities. Starting in 2005, States had to demonstrate how they were meeting UTL and TCL requirements in order to receive State Homeland Security Grant Program funding. [10]

In March 2011, the Obama Administration issued PPD-8 calling for a new National Preparedness Goal based on core capabilities. [11] In September 2011, DHS release its new National Preparedness Goal as follows:

"A secure and resilient Nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk." [12, p. 1]

If State resources prove insufficient to the task, the Governor might request assistance from neighboring states under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Under the terms of the EMAC, neighboring States can provide civilian resources and National Guard support under the direction of the local Incident Command Post.

The 2011 NPG replaced the 36 Target Capabilities with 35 Core Capabilities. The revised National Preparedness System issued in November 2011 now required States to link HSGP funding requests towards achieving the Core Capabilities. They would demonstrate this by annually conducting a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA). [13]

The 2011 National Preparedness System also introduced the National Planning Framework. Just as the NRP and NIMS were considered part of the 2005 National Preparedness System, the National Planning Framework provided a family of plans, not only updating the National Response Framework, and also adding a National Prevention Framework, National Protection Framework, National Mitigation Framework, and National Disaster Recovery Framework. [14, p. 1]

First Responders may apply to the FEMA Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) to obtain funding for equipment and training. Funding needs are determined by the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) program that requires States to assess their readiness against a set of Core Capabilities. The idea is to achieve the National Preparedness Goal through incremental improvement.

In September 2015, DHS issued a second National Preparedness Goal under the Obama Administration. The 2015 version did not change the NPG itself, however, it did revise the Core Capabilities, reducing their number from 35 to 32. Otherwise, the Disaster Preparedness System remained unchanged. [15]

Homeland Security Exercises

To validate existing Core Capabilities, the 2011 National Preparedness System advocates the use of homeland security exercises. [13, p. 5] In 2007, DHS issued guidance in four volumes for conducting homeland security exercise in the form of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program. HSEEP offered a systematic method for planning, executing, and documenting homeland security exercises. [16] In 2013, the four HSEEP volumes were slimmed down to one. [17] Otherwise, not much had changed. The ultimate objective of HSEEP exercises is to identify deficiencies and take actions to correct them. State and Local government may request funding to conduct HSEEP exercises under the FEMA Homeland Security Grant Program.

At the Federal level, homeland security exercises are conducted more formally under the National Exercise Program (NEP). In December 2003, the Bush Administration issued HSPD-8 authorizing a National Exercise Program to train and test national decision makers across multiple Federal departments. [18] The 2006 Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act required NEP to conform to HSEEP. NEP exercises are planned and executed by the FEMA National Exercise Division under the guidance and coordination of the White House Domestic Readiness Group. Prior to 2013, the NEP consisted of two types of exercises: 1) National Level Exercises (NLEs), and 2) Principal Level Exercises (PLEs). An NLE was an operations-based exercise conducted annually addressing potential catastrophic scenarios involving Federal, State, and Local agencies. A PLE was a quarterly discussion-based exercise designed to assist senior policy makers with evaluating emerging threats. [19] Starting in 2013, the NEP began a

two-year exercise cycle. Each NEP cycle includes various types of exercises at the Federal, State, and Local levels, culminating in a capstone NLE at the end of the cycle. The sequence of exercises is designed to become increasingly more complex during the course of the NEP cycle. Some exercises may be classified. The number of exercises executed during each cycle depend on the Principal Objectives recommended by the White House Domestic Readiness Group and approved by the National Security Council Principal's Committee. Lessons learned during the exercise are evaluated and disseminated to respective agencies to take appropriate corrective action as necessary. [20]

The first series of national homeland security exercises were called TOPOFF, short for TOP OFFICIALS. TOPOFF exercises were conducted from 2000 to 2009.

- TOPOFF 1, May 2000, simulated biological and chemical attacks in Denver CO and Portsmouth NH.
- TOPOFF 2, May 2003, simulated WMD attacks in Chicago IL and Seattle WA.
- TOPOFF 3, April 2005, simulated biological and chemical attacks in Connecticut and New Jersey.
- TOPOFF 4, October 2007, simulated dirty bomb attacks in Guam, Phoenix AZ, and Portland OR. [21]

TOPOFF exercises were replaced by NLEs starting in 2009. Then in 2013, NLEs became Capstone exercises ending the two-year NEP cycle.

- NLE 09, July 2009, simulated terrorist attempts to enter U.S. after major overseas attack.
- NLE 10, May 2010, simulated terrorist attack using Improvised Nuclear Device (IND).
- NLE 11, May 2011, simulated earthquake along the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ).
- NLE 12, multiple exercises simulating cyber attacks on critical infrastructure.
- NLE 14, multiple exercises simulating nuclear weapon accident in Alaska.
- NLE 15, multiple exercises simulating earthquakes, nuclear accidents, and chemical attacks. [21]

Exercises are a part of the National Preparedness System which establishes a continuous cycle of equipping, training, exercising, and evaluating. At the national level, Federal agencies participate in the National Exercise Program (NEP) that now culminate in a two-year capstone National Level Exercise (NLE).

Conclusion

Since 2003, the Department of Homeland Security has led efforts to integrate and strengthen the nation's ability to respond to catastrophic incidents. The failure of Hurricane Katrina intensified those efforts. As a result, responding agencies across the country have adopted the Incident Command System and acquired new capabilities particularly with respect to WMD attack. Since hurricane Katrina, it is fair to say that the nation has become proficient at responding to natural disasters. And though the nation has mercifully not been put to the test, it may also be said that it is much better prepared than it was on 9/11. This is a DHS success.

Challenge Your Understanding

The following questions are designed to challenge your understanding of the material presented in this chapter. Some questions may require additional research outside this book in order to provide a complete answer.

1. What is the responsibility of the State Governor?
2. How did 9/11 prompt Federal support for State and Local first responders?
3. List and describe the two major emergency response initiatives introduced by HSPD-5.
4. Under what authority may the President grant Federal assistance to State Governors?
5. Who does the FCO represent and who do they work with to coordinate Federal assistance?
6. In what form is Federal assistance provided to the States?
7. When Federal assistance arrives on-scene to the disaster, who do they work for?
8. How does the Incident Commander direct all elements towards a common objective?
9. What agreement allows States to request assistance from each other?
10. How do exercise programs help improve emergency preparedness?