



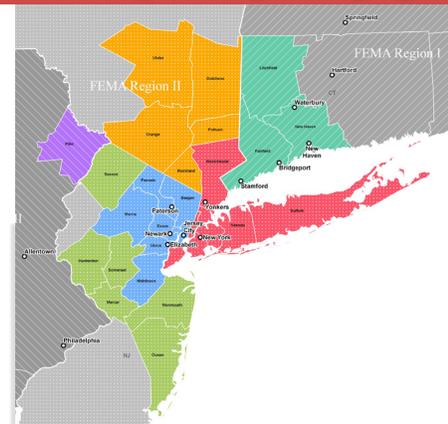
# Catastrophic Response

Coordination | Communication | Unity of Effort

*Working together makes us stronger*

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**Radiation Changes Everything** The focus of this issue of *Catastrophic Response* is radiation, a risk that is widely misunderstood. Radiological contamination in the field brings with it multiple layers of complexity. It creates a demand for resources (personnel, supplies, equipment, expertise) that would far exceed what is immediately available. It compresses response timeframes from days to hours and hours to minutes. It dramatically increases public confusion and fear, and experts would be asked for answers that they won't immediately have. Multiple agencies would be needed to provide environmental testing but these agencies today cannot effectively share their data. Finally, multiple agencies at all levels of government would claim ownership of a radiation incident. Our Regional Radiological Dispersal Device (R2D2) Project is focused on the challenges associated with this very real threat. As with much of the work of this program, its mission includes the effective coordination that can create order from the chaos such an incident would bring.



## EXEC'S PODIUM

### COMMUNICATIONS 101: TALKING AND LISTENING

BY DON BOYCE – Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) REGION I Administrator



Emergency Managers come from very diverse backgrounds—there's no question that words used by some are misunderstood/misinterpreted by others. Sometimes this phenomenon creates walls that form before the dialogue even gets the chance to begin. Managing the tools of speech and listening are critical components to success.

From my early days as a Paramedic in NYC to my current position as the Regional Administrator for FEMA Region 1, talking—and listening—have been two of the most valuable tools I have carried with me. All too forgotten as a skill set in their own right, basic communication skills are essential—they are the fundamental building blocks that allow us to achieve success.

Commissioner Bruno, in his March 2011 Catastrophic Response article, made many great points on the importance of relationships, integration, and unity of effort and command. Without the ability to communicate in a concise and accurate manner, the aforementioned engagements would stand the risk of being negatively impacted. In this profession, where at times critical decisions are made multiple times every

minute, there is not much time to allow someone the benefit of delivering their message or request over a protracted timeframe. There is a critical moment—sometimes mere seconds—where a basic size-up occurs that results in the immediate determination of whether one will trust the other enough to work with them—I am not suggesting that this is either right or wrong—it just IS. To move forward effectively we must first recognize the importance of speaking WITH each other versus AT each other. Much of that capability is achieved by listening to the responses that your speech is provoking. A true leader will acknowledge the need to talk, listen, and sometimes mediate to navigate through stressors, emotions, and sheer adversity presented for the sole purpose of presenting obstacles. As emergency managers, we own little but control much. We bring tremendous value to chaotic situations; we bring concepts, plans, and theoretical applications that can be rapidly morphed to meet the challenges set upon us by the scenario with which we are confronted. We should learn—and teach—and always remember that there's great value in talking and listening that, when used correctly, culminates in tremendous power that enables us to lead up, across, and down for absolute effectiveness.

## NEWS

May 9th and 10th the Regional Logistics Program welcomed over 225 attendees and speakers from over 100 agencies around the country to LogCon 2011: A Universal Approach to Disaster Logistics. For the first time, emergency management professionals in local, state, and federal government and the private and nonprofit sectors came together to share best practices and work towards achieving a universal approach to disaster logistics planning. The discussions that took place at LogCon will help us continue to build and strengthen the Universal Logistics Standard; the Program will release a short LogCon after-action report (AAR) in June, documenting lessons learned and next steps. In the meantime, presentations and summaries of panel sessions will be available on <http://www.logcon2011.org>.



FEMA Administrator W. Craig Fugate addressing LogCon 2011 attendees

### CATASTROPHIC QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

*“Catastrophic mission requires agencies at all levels of the response working seamlessly regardless of incident cause, size, location, or complexity...”*

—Kelly McKinney, Deputy Commissioner, NYC Office of Emergency Management

## GET INVOLVED

## Conferences:

## DISASTER HOUSING SUMMIT

On June 14, 2011, the NY-NJ-CT-PA RCPT Disaster Housing Team will hold its Second Annual Disaster Housing Summit at the American Red Cross building in New York City. Information gathered from Summit workshops with regional experts will be incorporated into the land-use and finance sections of the Disaster Housing Plan and will inform the direction of future disaster housing projects.

For additional information, please contact Disaster Housing Plan Manager Karen Kubey – [kkubey@regionalcatplanning.org](mailto:kkubey@regionalcatplanning.org) or 646-215-6556.

## Post-Disaster Participatory Urban Planning

Home to 10 cities of over 100,000 residents and 20 cities with over 3,000 persons per square mile, our region is the most densely populated in the country. In the case of a catastrophic disaster, we anticipate a host of land-use planning challenges particular to urban areas. While post-disaster planning processes such as FEMA's Emergency Support Function (ESF) #14 have been successfully used in suburban and rural areas, the United States has yet to incorporate fully the lessons of urban disasters like Katrina. We know from precedent that real coordination between the government and community-based organizations, and the engagement of the public at large will be critical to our region's recovery after a disaster and that this project sets a national standard for true partnership between the government agencies and community-based organizations that may be involved in post-disaster recovery.

To address these issues, the disaster housing team will launch a Post-Disaster Participatory Urban Planning project at its June 14 Disaster Housing Summit. The project's Steering Committee will bring together the region's foremost experts in land-use planning, public engagement, and long-term recovery to develop a communications framework and principles to guide participatory urban planning efforts after a catastrophic event. Products will be shared with the planners, emergency managers, and community-based organizations around the region. The Participatory Urban Planning project is central to the disaster housing plan as a whole; the work will generate key information for the diverse set of disciplines involved in post-disaster planning and will broaden the group of stakeholders involved in creating the disaster housing plan.



Regional Leadership: Joe Bruno, Charlie McKenna, Jerome Hatfield, Scott DiGiralomo and (seated) Joe Picciano and Kathleen Donovan

## Radiological Data into Actionable Information

Take a moment to consider the scene after a bomb detonation. Visualize the damage caused by the explosion: smoke, dust, debris, casualties, injuries, and self-evacuees. What if that bomb was a radiological dispersal device (RDD)? Take a moment to consider what you can't visualize—radiation.

You shouldn't be surprised that radiation adds layers of complexity to an emergency response. Each part of the operation, stationary or mobile, must be overlaid and associated with radiological data representing the isotope, deposition, total dose, and radiation exposure rate of each victim and object. Even if you understand the complex data embedded in an RDD response, how is that data processed to produce useful information and inform decision-making?



RIC Plan Manager Ben Stevenson and team presenting the R2D2 Plan at the NJ Meadowlands

Like other Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) planning projects, the R2D2 Plan focuses on how regional executives communicate and coordinate in the aftermath of a catastrophic incident. In addition, the R2D2 Plan outlines this regional coordination process using a tiered approach of involving the right people and providing a communication forum. The R2D2 Regional Playbook calls for the formation of a Science and Technology Advisory Committee (STAC) to consider radiological data collected and provide regional executives with recommendations and actionable information concerning public health consequences, radiological contamination, and environmental effects. Armed with this information, regional executives can make informed decisions and adjust operations effectively. Automating the process to designate and assign personnel qualified to interpret radiological data is an important piece of regional radiological preparedness and response.

Coordination between scientists and radiological subject matter experts at all levels of government is critical to a successful RDD response in both the immediate aftermath and long-term recovery. By scripting a collaborative process to pool expertise and facilitate information sharing, we, as a region, have taken an important step in managing the complexity of an RDD response.

## Does YOUR Jurisdiction Have an RDD Plan?

The resources required to respond to an RDD detonation are extensive. The local response will encompass all of the jurisdiction's resources. Within hours, numerous state and federal assets will appear on scene. How does the local incident commander manage the overall response? The incident commander will need to execute simultaneous operations, such as search and rescue, evacuation, medical triage, public health protection, and recovery, while at the same time assess and understand radiological contamination.

One of the gaps identified in the RCPGP R2D2 Plan process was that most local jurisdictions do not have an emergency plan in place to respond to an RDD. With this planning gap in mind, one of the main goals of the R2D2 Plan was to compile best practices and planning guidance into a user-friendly template. The end result is the **R2D2 Local Plan Template**, a flexible tool that local jurisdictions can modify and make their own.

This template breaks up an RDD response into 10

operations and provides checklists for major objectives, key decision points, and resources required. While individual jurisdictions vary in RDD response capability and resources, the template assumes the local response will quickly become overwhelmed and provides a framework to incorporate county, state, regional, and federal resources and assets.

Your jurisdiction may not have the subject matter expertise or specialized equipment to conduct extensive radiological surveying operations. But by identifying your capabilities and adapting the R2D2 Local Plan Template, you can create your own Local RDD Plan with specific operational objectives that you can achieve and fill remaining gaps with state and federal assistance. By modifying the R2D2 Local Plan Template in concert with your county and state, your jurisdiction can come away with a completed RDD Plan and a better understanding of what RDD response and recovery would mean for your locality.

## WE REMEMBER

We mourn the loss of our respected colleague James J. Callahan III, Emergency Management Commissioner of Nassau County, NY. Jim is shown here at the National Hurricane Center in February 2007 with (from L to R) Jennifer Wacha, David Zatlin, Jim Callahan, Kelly McKinney and Ira Foreman (seated).

