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Emergency Management: Activation Lists for Emergency Operations Centers

SUMMARY

Emergency Disaster Plans (EDP) should contain a regularly updated Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation list that details the positions, names, and contact information of both primary and alternate EOC personnel. This list will enable prompt EOC staffing and activation in the event of an incident.

DESCRIPTION

On January 21, 2004, the City of Escalon in San Joaquin County, California conducted a tabletop exercise that simulated a terrorist attack that caused the derailment and explosion of a train loaded with propane gas. The exercise's objective was to test the adequacy of the city's EDP. In order to coordinate the city-wide emergency response, the city's director of emergency services requested the staffing and activation of the EOC. However, the EDP only described the EOC staffing positions. It did not contain the specific names or contact information of the individuals assigned to fill EOC positions.

To activate the EOC, city officials had to call each emergency response agency and request the name and contact information of the person designated to staff the listed EOC position. This process was time-consuming and resulted in delayed activation of the EOC, making initial coordination of city-wide emergency response activities difficult and inefficient. Following the incident exercise, emergency management personnel recommended that the EDP include an up-to-date EOC activation list complete with positions, names, and detailed contact information.

In order to quickly staff and activate the EOC following a large-scale disaster, EDPs should contain an EOC activation list that specifies the positions, names, and contact information of primary and alternate EOC staffing personnel. This list should be updated at least every six months.

CITATION

The City of Escalon, San Joaquin County, CA. *After-Action Report: Train Derailment Tabletop Exercise, January 21, 2004.*

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