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LESSON LEARNED

Emergency Operations Center Management: Establishing a Standard Format for Briefings

SUMMARY

Emergency operations center (EOC) managers should consider establishing a standardized format for briefings during activations. This will ensure that EOC managers receive the information they need in a timely, organized manner.

DESCRIPTION

From October 24 to 26, 2009, the Bay Area Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) sponsored the Urban Shield 2009 Full-Scale Exercise (FSE). The FSE took place throughout a 700-square mile region within Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties, California. The exercise consisted of 25 scenarios that assessed the ability of law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel to respond to multiple terrorist events and other emergencies. Law enforcement personnel from 48 agencies, 200 fire personnel representing 28 departments, 175 regional EMS personnel, and 216 special weapons and tactics officers representing 27 law enforcement tactical teams participated in the FSE. The FSE included one department operations center (DOC), four area commands, and three medical checkpoints.

The Bay Area UASI consists of the cities of Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose, 10 counties, more than 100 incorporated cities, and a number of special districts, transportation agencies, and several airports. The Bay Area UASI serves 7 million people.

Site commands located at the FSE's 25 exercise scenarios reported to 1 of 4 area commands. During exercise operations, the DOC conducted conference calls with area commanders every 3 hours. Area commanders used these briefings to provide updates on exercise scenario sites and to ask questions. During the first conference call, the DOC and area commanders exchanged information in a disorganized and incomplete manner. The area commanders had not received information requirements or a standardized briefing format. Consequently, area commanders provided the information that they thought would be useful for the DOC manager; however, at times, this information did not align with the DOC manager's information needs. The DOC manager had to follow each briefing with additional questions to obtain the necessary information, which proved time-consuming and inefficient.

On the second day of exercise operations, the DOC manager developed a briefing format for area commanders to use to ensure that they provided the necessary information. The after-action report (AAR) recommended that DOC managers consider establishing a standardized briefing format to utilize during briefings with the area commanders. The AAR also recommended that personnel receive training on this briefing format.

EOC managers should consider establishing a standardized format for briefings during activations. This will ensure that EOC managers receive the information they need in a timely, organized manner.

CITATION

Bay Area, California, Urban Area Security Initiative. *Urban Shield 2009 After Action Report (AAR)*. 10 Mar 2010.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=46156>.

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