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LESSON LEARNED

Joint Information Center Operations: Procuring Movable Furniture and Equipment for Centers

SUMMARY

Emergency management agencies should consider procuring movable furniture and equipment for their joint information centers (JIC). This will help ensure that agencies can effectively support expanded JIC operations during prolonged events that require the deployment of public information officers (PIO) from numerous agencies.

DESCRIPTION

The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) sponsored and conducted the Maine Statewide Communication Functional Exercise (FE) in conjunction with 14 county emergency operations centers (EOC) on October 29 and 30, 2009. Participants included state and county EOC personnel, the American Red Cross, and the Maine National Guard. MEMA conducted the FE to test its state and county EOC communications capabilities after a statewide power outage. The primary objective of the FE was to demonstrate EOC continuity of operations, including maintaining communications, after losing power and Internet service. The FE scenario was based upon a major ice storm in 1998 that caused blackouts throughout the state.

The furniture at MEMA's JIC was not configurable and blocked power, phone, and Internet wall jacks. This did not prove to be an issue during the FE, although exercise evaluators observed that the furniture could hinder JIC operations during a prolonged event that could involve PIOs from numerous agencies. MEMA could encounter difficulties accommodating these additional PIOs due to limited seating and access to critical utilities at the JIC. To address this issue, the after-action report recommends that emergency managers research moveable furniture and equipment to improve JIC setup and operations. Movable furniture and equipment would enable emergency managers to configure the JIC based upon the agencies and number of personnel working at it.

Emergency management agencies should consider procuring movable furniture and equipment for their JICs. This will help ensure that agencies can effectively support expanded JIC operations during prolonged events that require the deployment of PIOs from numerous agencies.

CITATION

Maine Emergency Management Agency. *Maine Statewide Functional Exercise After-Action Report*. 01 Apr 2010.

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