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LESSON LEARNED

Emergency Management: Hiring a Caterer for Extended Emergency Operations Center Activations

SUMMARY

Emergency operations centers (EOC) should consider hiring a caterer for EOC activations lasting longer than one operational period. This can be achieved through a prearranged contract for catering support, which can be initiated as needed during EOC activations.

DESCRIPTION

The US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and Joint Forces Command co-sponsored the Ardent Sentry exercise from May 7 to 18, 2007, in the US and Canada. Ardent Sentry consisted of five exercise components: the National Guard full-scale exercise (FSE) Vigilant Guard, the Northern Edge FSE in Canada, the Hoosier Sentry combined functional and full-scale exercise in Indiana, the Alaska Shield combined functional and full-scale exercise in Alaska, and the HURREX tabletop exercise in Rhode Island. The main goal of Ardent Sentry was to demonstrate multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional unity of effort in support of a civilian-led response to a national crisis. Ardent Sentry simulated a Category 3 hurricane making landfall in New England, a nuclear detonation in Indiana, and several terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure in Alaska and waters along the western US-Canadian border. Ardent Sentry required the coordination of over 3,000 federal, state, and local responders and more than 2,000 active-duty personnel.

Canada served as a full partner in the Ardent Sentry exercise through the coordination of Canada Command and US military resources. Canada Command oversees the operations of Canadian forces and coordinates with NORTHCOM.

NORTHCOM, the National Guard, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, the Indiana National Guard, and the Indianapolis-Marion County Emergency Management Division co-sponsored the Hoosier Sentry combined functional and full-scale exercise from May 10 to 13, 2007, at 6 locations in south-central Indiana. Hoosier Sentry simulated the detonation of a 10-kiloton nuclear device by a terrorist cell in northeastern Indianapolis. Exercise objectives focused on integrating National Guard and active-duty military resources with emergency response operations. The combined exercise also evaluated federal and state abilities to support local responders during a weapon of mass destruction/hazardous materials incident. The exercise required emergency response and military teams to provide sheltering operations for over 77,000 notional civilians and to treat over 500 role-playing victims. Over 100 federal, state, and local agencies and 1,000 response personnel participated in the Hoosier Sentry exercise.

During the FSE, the Indianapolis-Marion County EOC hired a catering service for the first time to provide regularly scheduled healthy meals. In previous activations, the EOC staff was often distracted from its duties by the need to arrange for and pickup food from restaurants nearby. Arranging for catered meals during the Ardent Sentry FSE eliminated these distractions while providing nutritious meals to the staff members. EOC staff could

focus on operations without being concerned about when or where meals would be provided. This resulted in smoother, uninterrupted EOC operations. The FSE after-action report concluded that the catered was a “force multiplier” for the EOC.

EOCs should consider hiring a caterer for EOC activations lasting longer than one operational period. This can be achieved through a prearranged contract for catering support, which can be initiated as needed during EOC activations.

CITATION

Indianapolis-Marion County Emergency Management Division. *2007 Ardent Sentry, Indiana Homeland Security District 5 After Action Report*. 16 Aug 2007.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=26593>

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