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LESSON LEARNED

Critical Infrastructure: Developing a Situation Report Template to Enhance Information Sharing with Emergency Management Agencies

SUMMARY

Critical infrastructure entities should consider collaborating to develop a template for situation reports (SITREPs). This can help prevent critical infrastructure SITREPs from containing redundant information.

DESCRIPTION

In December 2010 and January 2011, the State of Queensland, Australia, experienced record rainfall, which caused massive flooding throughout the state. Flood inundation damaged approximately 29,000 homes and businesses. In addition, flooding forced thousands of people from towns and cities to evacuate. In total, the floods caused 35 casualties, and 3 individuals remained missing as of August 1, 2011. The Australian Government declared a disaster zone of more than 500,000 square miles, affecting more than 2.5 million people. Flood response operations included national, state, district, and local personnel. Further, the Australian Defense Force deployed 1,900 military personnel to assist with response and recovery operations. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority estimates that flooding resulted in more than 5 billion Australian dollars in damage.

During the January 2011 flood event, local and military flood engineers distributed SITREPs several times a day to the Bureau of Meteorology, the Department of Environment and Resource Management, the Somerset Regional Council, the Moreton Bay Regional Council, the Ipswich City Council, the Brisbane City Council, and emergency response agencies. These reports provided information about recorded rainfall, lake levels, rate of release and projected release of dams, and their likely impact. Some dam operators also provided edited versions of these same SITREPs, called "technical situation reports," to the South East Queensland (SEQ) Water Grid manager. The SEQ Water Grid manager forwarded these technical reports to selected response agencies, such as the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Environment and Resource Management, and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. This was in accordance with [Protocol for the Communication of Flooding Information for the Brisbane](#)

The State of Queensland is part of the Commonwealth of Australia. Queensland is Australia's second largest state with an area of approximately 666,000 square miles and a population of 4.5 million people. The capital, Brisbane, is located in the southeastern corner of the state.



Map of Queensland

River Catchment. Emergency response entities noted that the flood engineers' SITREPs and the edited technical situation reports provided them with overlapping, redundant information in the midst of the disaster.

The Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Interim Report recommends that critical infrastructure entities collaborate to develop a SITREP template that establishes reporting requirements. The report also recommends that the critical infrastructure entities evaluate whether it would be more effective to develop a single document or several documents with different reporting requirements. Finally, the template should include the following information:

- Actual and expected releases;
- Current operating strategy;
- Meteorological observations and weather forecasts;
- Strategy and objectives of flood engineers; and
- Additional comments.

Emergency management agencies should consider collaborating with critical infrastructure entities to develop SITREPs templates. This can help prevent critical infrastructure SITREPs from containing redundant information as well as streamline the reporting process during incidents.

CITATIONS

Lahey, Kate. "Defence Force Helps Queensland on Road to Recovery," *The Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, Vol. 26, No. 3. 01 Jul 2011.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=53673>

Queensland, Australia, Floods Commission of Inquiry. *Queensland, Australia, Floods Commission of Inquiry Interim Report*. 01 Aug 2011.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=53550>

South East Queensland Water. *Protocol for the Communication of Flooding Information for the Brisbane River Catchment – Including Floodwater Releases from Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams*. 01 Jan 2010.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=54085>

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The SEQ Water Grid manager manages the strategic operations and wholesale customer service for the SEQ Water Grid. In case of a floodwater release, [Protocol for the Communication of Flooding Information for the Brisbane River Catchment](#) directs the SEQ Water Grid manager to assume the role of the state's lead communication point of contact and to concentrate on the communication aspects of release timings and the duration of effects.



Flooding on January 10, 2011