



HENNEPIN COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
DEBRIEFING

(Number of pages including this cover sheet 6)

35W BRIDGE COLLAPSE EOC DEBRIEFING

DATE: August 23, 2007
TIME: 1:00pm - 4:00pm
LOCATION: Bloomington Fire Station 1
10 West 95th Street
FACILTATOR: Gail Plewacki

Anderson, Bill	Eiklenborg, Laura	Musicant, Gretchen
Asleson, Mike	Forte, Rocco	Ogren, Paul
Babcock, David	Gregerson, Doug	Rollwagen, Kristi
Bleskachek, Tim	Hamilton, Heidi	Skomra, Bob
Canova, Ted	Hang, Mandy	Turnbull, Tim
Chavez, Michelle	Hermanson, Stacy	Velasco-Thompson, Ellen
Davidson, Carolyn	Kennedy, Mike	Wagner, Karen
Deegan, Tom	Kennedy, Steve	Weinberger, Paul
Dejung, John	Ketterhagen, Kim	Willenbring, Lynn
Dressler, Lisa	Lane, Barret	

PRESENT:

I. Meeting Introduction and Ground Rules

Gail Plewacki opened the meeting by recognizing everyone for an effective rescue and recovery effort. She alluded to the recognition received from the outside for all the things that were done right and established that the purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the response from an internal perspective, not to find fault, but to look at opportunities for improvement, to look at the things that were done right, and to discuss how they can be replicated in future incidents. She asked the group why the response was effective and was it the processes followed, if any, that contributed to the effectiveness. She wanted everyone to be honest and candid.

The following is a breakdown of the elements of the emergency incident and the discussion that occurred (organized by discipline):

Events of the Day

- Collapse itself (State bridge, County land, City property)
- Land and water rescue
- Fire to put out in the semi-truck
- Hazardous materials
- Radioactive material and 900 pounds of mercury (call from the University of Minnesota)
- Severe thunderstorm (lightning, thunder and rain)
- Triage, transport of victims
- Crime scene
- Security on land and water
- Rush hour
- Twins game
- Prime time news time

Disciplines' Roles

DISCIPLINE	ROLE
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act as unified command ▪ Provide rescue effort above water
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pull victims out (initial response) ▪ Patrol/secure area
911	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relay information from callers to responders ▪ Act as liaison between 911 and EOC ▪ Assist technologists in setting up cameras, phones, etc.
311	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serve as liaison to residence ▪ Provide public information to media (New York Times)
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Field calls ▪ Provide basic information and ask people to stay off phones – rescue effort underway ▪ Schedule interviews ▪ Conduct press conference (9:15PM)
Emergency Preparedness/ Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize/activate EOC at 6:15PM (logistics, people, equipment) ▪ Contact Incident Commanders from all agencies ▪ Implement NIMS ▪ Disseminate resources to commanders
Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Play support role ▪ Supply equipment (cranes) ▪ Bring in lighting ▪ Provide housekeeping to EOC (garbage collection, chairs, etc.) ▪ Traffic, working with Communications
Health and Family Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with Red Cross and Police Chaplin to provide behavioral health needs to victims and their families
BIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setup computer and cable TV connections ▪ Setup telephones (batteries, extra bandwidth)
Red Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administer immediate care to victims ▪ Work with Family Service Center ▪ Participate in Press Conference with EOC
Policy Makers – Mayor's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Answer huge volume of calls the first 24 hours ▪ Dealt with large amount of people that came into the Mayor's Office ▪ Standby and assist Director of Emergency Preparedness in whichever capacity ▪ Coordinate political response with Governor
Intergovernmental Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handhold and make tour arrangement of site ▪ Triage information to multiple agencies
Risk Management / Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Play support role ▪ Order supplies and locate resources ▪ Track donations ▪ Track employee injuries ▪ Track reimbursable expenses (FEMA format)
City Clerk's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide continuity of government operations ▪ Prepare document for Mayor declaring emergency ▪ Keep legal process going ▪ Provide update to City Council
State of Minnesota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support local officials

DISCIPLINE	ROLE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrive at scene at 6:45PM – assess situation, establish staging areas ▪ Inform state administrators and EOC team of updates from site ▪ Act as liaison between Minneapolis, State and Feds
State Highway Patrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with Public Works to provide aviation services for traffic ▪ Provide access to MNDOT cameras at site ▪ Coordinate volunteers from other law enforcement agencies ▪ Provide police presence at site ▪ Provide aviation tours for elected officials ▪ Cooperate with Minneapolis Police Department on perimeter issues ▪ Dignitary visitors
Hennepin County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrive at Minneapolis EOC to assist and support in every resource ▪ Be that communication, that contact ▪ Establish Hennepin County EOC ▪ Communicate with Hennepin County Board Chair, Administrator
Hennepin County Sheriff's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not present at debriefing to report

II. Did the notification system work?

The notification system did not work as well as it should. Below were issues identified:

- Contact list was outdated – someone needs to take ownership of this responsibility and keep the list up-to-date.
- Cell phones were at the end of their battery life due to the time of the day, most chargers were at home – thunderstorm interfered with service. It did not cripple the operation, but did hinder it.
- Phone system proved to be unreliable, text or instant messaging may be a more effective form of communication.
- Dispatchers were responsible for notification, but were also handling extensive volume of calls – key players could be missed. A mass communication system is needed for quick notification.
- Relationships are responsible for some of the contacts that the list or the system did not address.

III. Discussion

1. Manpower and skill sets

The first four hours is critical and this was one area that was lacking. We need to go three-deep in all areas in order to respond more effectively. We need to use the lessons learned to plan for the National Republic Convention. (We do not have enough law enforcement in the state to respond to an event of this magnitude if something should occur.)

2. Team Dynamics

Personalities were not in the way. Rocco took a bad situation, applied his ICS skills and got disciplines working together. The lack of boundaries allowed for a free exchange of information, brainstorming, and problem-solving. If individuals did not know the answers, they knew who to contact. The 4-hour staff shifts (100% coverage) worked out well.

3. EOC Facility

Space is inadequate; the area is too small, too noisy and not enough room for individuals to work in. Expertise was required 100% of the time, but was being let go, because of the lack of space. A better command center with the proper equipment setup is needed in order to be more proactive with future issues. Suggestion: the 311 facility can be converted for emergency use if needed; it is equipped with 24 workstations.

4. Equipment logistics

There wasn't a good way to find out what types of equipment were available within the City for use. An electronic inventory system needs to be in place to capture this information so that it could be accessible from the EOC. The information also needs to be made available in paper form. Equipment that is not available in the City can then be easily ordered from outside vendors – contracts should be set up with each to supply on demand. Central Stores need to remain open 24 hours a day during crises. A tracking system needs to be established for equipment once they arrive and in use. There are several life vests missing.

It was extremely helpful that other jurisdictions kept track of all of their equipment and Minneapolis did not have to worry about it.

5. Equipment Issues

- Phones – cell phones ran out of battery (chargers at home) and storm interfered with reception. There needs to be extra chargers and electrical outlets available at the EOC. A dedicated landline also needs to be established – Rocco's line was rolled over to the EOC so he was receiving every type of calls. Suggestion: use text/instant messaging for communicating short messages to save time and free up phones.
- Printer – no network printer available the EOC. All documents were emailed and printed on one local printer.
- Ports/electrical – need to have adequate data ports and electrical outlets.
- Monitor wall – One television is not enough. The EOC needs a monitor wall with multiple channels (2, 4, 5, 9, 11, CNN, etc.), because visual information is critical – need to know what is being reported on the outside. Headsets would be helpful for noise control.

6. Websites

An official website needs to be established for communicating the number of fatalities (“several” was mistakenly interpreted as “seven” in a news report) and other incident related information. The EOC also needs a way to post or provide updates.

7. Internal Communication

There should be communication within departments to provide updates and directions to employees who report to work the next day.

8. GIS/CAD System

An employee had access to the CAD program from home and was able to take immediate action. GIS did not anticipate establishing an outside office; it was difficult to work, because maps and equipment were going bad with the storm. They also did not have enough laptops.

9. Red Cross

Facilities were taken over by the Department of Defense, Federal Staff, etc., but access to the facilities was available to everyone. Need to coordinate message, because it was engaged in crisis management over a false blood crisis. Needed at briefings, provide services the government does not.

10. Victims' Families

Whose role is it to return calls to the victims' families? Some calls were not being returned and they need answers. How can we best manage the list of victims, status, locations, death information, privacy, etc.?

11. Citizens' need for information

They look to 311, Mayor's Office, and the elected officials for this information. How can we best handle these requests? These needs have to be integrated into the emergency plan.

12. Emergency Management Department

This should be made into a separate department in the City.

13. Elected Officials' Roles

They could be present at the EOC to address policy issues that arise, interface with the Governor, visit the site, and communicate to constituents. Providing elected officials with information keeps them informed and may address the gap of their value at the onset. (Could provide by way of video access, a window, or the EOC website.)

14. Family Center

Access to services? Who runs it? What is the best way to disseminate information? Provide ongoing care to the injured via Hennepin County, Red Cross, and volunteer organizations.

IV. Summary

Our successful operation in this disaster had been based on relationships, open communication, procedures, planning, training and equipment. We need to continue to build on these strengths through the cycle of analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation. We need to let our experts make the decisions and then trust them to do their job, and we did this very well. We need to use the momentum and success of this experience to train others and build depths of skills. We also need to address the perception that "it looked effortless" and "this will never happen again." We'll benefit from the lessons learned from the Bridge collapse response to strengthen planning efforts for the Republican National Convention!