

ECHO Script

Emergency and Community Health Outreach



ECHO GOVT RESPONSE.doc

-- PACKAGE SCRIPT ONLY – For SPNN to produce

EDIT DIRECTIONS	AUDIO TRACK
	<p>Local, state and federal governments have many roles in emergencies.</p> <p>The government’s responsibilities include:</p> <p>Helping people survive disasters by teaching them how to prepare themselves, their families and their businesses.</p> <p>Responding quickly to any disaster. To do this, government must plan ahead. When disaster strikes, the government puts its plan into action to protect people and property.</p> <p>Facilitating recovery by helping to repair and rebuild communities after disasters.</p> <p>Preparing means planning. Government offers people information on how they can plan to survive a disaster by making survival kits and a family disaster plan.</p> <p>Local government planners consider which disasters could happen in their</p>

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communities, what hazards exist, and what resources they can bring to help in an emergency.

They then write emergency response plans that give roles and responsibilities to each of the government agencies in responding to a disaster in the community.

Planning also includes training for responders, creating warning systems like sirens and radio broadcasts, and getting equipment like fire trucks, ambulances and special suits for handling hazardous materials.

Governments hold practice drills every year to test their written plan and to make sure that agencies know what to do and how to work together.

When disasters strike, a community responds according to its planning and training. All disaster response starts locally. Problems are identified and prioritized and resources are put into action.

Local government agency people such as health officials, emergency managers, law enforcement officers, fire personnel, emergency medical workers, and others work together in emergencies and share resources.

When community resources are exhausted, local officials call on neighboring communities or their county government to help them. They may also need state and federal government help with a large

disaster.

In an emergency, government officials might move people to shelters outside the disaster area. Government workers and community volunteers may work side by side in response to a disaster, doing things like clearing roads and placing sandbags to hold back floodwaters.

City, county and state governments work with non-profit organizations like the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, because they also provide emergency services.

To cooperate effectively and make good use of everyone's resources, local governments set up emergency operation centers where all the responding agencies can work together. From there, officials issue public statements to the media to let citizens know what to do.

A good example of preparation and response took place during the flooding on Minnesota's Red River in April, 2006.

When the snow began to melt and the rains came to northwest Minnesota in late March, the National Weather Service predicted moderate to severe flooding in nine counties along the Red River.

Local officials in towns and counties along the Red River and its many branches worked with state agencies and the federal government's Army

Corps of Engineers to prepare for the flooding.

They built earthen dikes and placed sandbags to protect the towns from floodwater. They closed roads as the water rose and planned other routes for people who had to leave the area.

The people prepared to leave and take essential items with them.

As the water level slowly went down, crews of government workers removed the sandbags, took down the dikes, and began to clean up the mess left behind by the flood.

After such an event, state officials and inspectors from the Federal Emergency Management Agency review the damage to roads, bridges and sewer systems.

Depending on the amount of damage, communities in the affected areas may receive money from the federal government to rebuild roads and bridges and other community infrastructure.

After the disaster, counties and towns in the disaster area review their emergency plans and change them according to lessons learned from the disaster.

Response may go on for days before recovery can begin.

Recovery begins when the responders leave. Local government

workers help people and businesses clean up debris from the disaster.

Roads, bridges and buildings may have to be rebuilt. Utilities such as water, gas and electricity may need to be restored.

And if there is potential for the same disaster to be repeated, people must decide whether to rebuild in disaster-prone areas.

Local governments must plan for and respond to all types of emergencies.

Response to some emergencies, such as disease outbreaks or incidents involving hazardous materials, may require the assets of several government and business organizations.

For example, if a truck overturns on a highway and spills hazardous chemicals, government responders must clean up the spill. Working with the companies that produce the chemicals, responders learn how to remove the chemicals safely.

When disease outbreaks occur, government health agencies work closely with hospitals, clinics, and other private care providers to ensure that people receive vaccines and that precautions are taken to reduce the spread of the disease.

As you can see, government has many roles in protecting people's lives and property in an emergency

— but it takes all levels of government, along with businesses, non-profit organizations and individual volunteers do the job well.

In fact, disaster planning starts with you. If you have...

...a survival kit,

...a plan to take shelter or escape,

...the knowledge of what to do when disaster strikes, and

...willingness to get involved in helping your neighbors,

...then you can work *with* your government to protect your community...

...and that makes everyone safer.

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