FEMA Lessons Learned Information Sharing
LLIS.gov

Sharing Information
Enhancing Preparedness
Strengthening Homeland Security

LESSON LEARNED

Emergency Management: Instituting an Operational Timeline to Organize Response Operations at Emergency Operations Centers

SUMMARY

Emergency operations center (EOC) managers should consider instituting an operational timeline that can be published in the EOC reference guide and accessed via the information management system. A timeline can help guide EOC operations during an activation.

DESCRIPTION

The New York State Office of Homeland Security, New York State Emergency Management Office, and New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) sponsored the Empire Express Hurricane Functional Exercise (FE) from May 30 to June 4, 2008. The exercise scenario involved a Category 2 hurricane that made landfall in New York City and impacted 3 nearby counties. This hurricane created a massive amount of debris, which posed significant public health risks to residents, and required extensive rescue operations. The New York State EOC coordinated response efforts with NYS DOH, regional health operations centers, and Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester counties. Six federal, fifty-four state, forty-nine local, and twenty private sector entities participated in the FE. The FE tested the ability of EOCs to coordinate a state-wide response to the hurricane.

The New York State EOC did not employ an operational schedule to guide the activities of personnel during the Empire Express Hurricane FE. Exercise evaluators noted that, while the activation of an EOC cannot always be predicted, an operational timeline can provide support to EOC personnel as they progress through an activation period. A timeline can clarify recurring meetings and deadlines for report submissions. It can also identify when EOC finance, logistics, operations, and planning sections should engage in certain activities. An operational timeline also familiarizes external agencies and localities with the EOC's schedule, which can help avoid scheduling conflicts.

The *Empire Express Hurricane Functional Exercise (FE) After-Action Report (AAR)* recommends that EOC managers institute an operational timeline for use during activations or exercises. The AAR also suggests that EOC managers publish this timeline in the state EOC position reference guide and post it in the work area of each functional group. The operational timeline should also be published to the EOC's information management system.

EOC managers should consider instituting an operational timeline that can be published in the EOC reference guide and accessed via the information management system. A timeline can help guide EOC operations during an activation.

CITATION

Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Empire Express Hurricane Functional Exercise (FE) After Action Report (AAR).* 12 Nov 2009.
https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=41330

DISCLAIMER

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (*LLIS.gov)* is the US Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency response and homeland security communities. The Web site and its contents are provided for informational purposes only, without warranty or guarantee of any kind, and do not represent the official positions of the US Department of Homeland Security. For more information on *LLIS.gov*, please email feedback@llis.dhs.gov or visit www.llis.gov.