



Regional Coalitions: The Benefits of Public and Private Partnerships

SIFMA BCP Best Practices Document
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Earlier this year, the SIFMA Business Contingency Planning (BCP) Best Practices Committee completed work on a survey regarding Regional Coalitions. The survey included 23 companies representing 648,000 employees and 2,600 locations. Based upon the survey results, the following areas of additional interests were identified and will be addressed by this document:

1. Increase awareness of public/private partnerships.
2. Define how to establish and maintain public/private partnership relationships and outline the “best practices” for participation.
3. Define how to engage regional partnerships for test planning and execution.

Public/Private Partnership Awareness

National VOAD – National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster is a coalition of organizations that share knowledge and resources to help disaster survivors and their communities. Members of National VOAD are nonprofit organizations that respond to disasters as part of their overall mission. VOADs function at the state and national level to deliver the following services to their communities:

- Preparedness and/or mitigation
- Mass care
- Emergency assistance and casework
- Emotional and/or spiritual care
- Supporting services to State/Territory VOAD member agencies
- Recovery
- Donations management
- Volunteer management
- Outreach and/or information and referral
- Animals and pets services

VOADs have been established in all fifty states and five territories. For more information, refer to the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster website at: www.nvoad.org.

COAD - Community Organizations Active in Disaster is a coalition of local organizations that come together to help a community make the best use of its resources in a disaster. COADs effectively mobilize and bring practical and timely assistance to disaster victims. Their mission is to organize and deploy community resources, in an effective and timely manner, in response to the needs of community disaster survivors, thereby reducing the social and economic impact of the disaster. There are numerous COADs at the state and local level. For more information, search the internet using “Community Organizations Active in Disaster” and then the name of the state or local municipality that you are interested in.

OEM – Office of Emergency Management is established by a local government to maintain disciplined emergency management personnel, including responders, planners, watch commanders, and administrative and support staff, to identify and respond to various hazards. One of the more prominent OEMs in the country is the New York City OEM which was established in 1996, and is a good example. The New York City OEM plans and prepares for emergencies, educates the public about preparedness, coordinates emergency response and recovery, and collects and disseminates emergency information. Some New York programs and services include:

- Ready New York, Community Emergency Response Teams, and Citizen Corps that reach more New Yorkers every day through public outreach, volunteerism, and strategic partnerships.
- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Incident Command System training.
- Corporate Emergency Access System (CEAS) which authorizes essential employees to access restricted areas following an emergency.
- Private Asset and Logistics Management System (PALMS) is a registry of private sector resources to help ensure that business donations are used and distributed effectively during an emergency.
- Emergency preparedness drills, exercises and training.

For more information, search the internet using “Office of Emergency Management” and then the name of the state or local municipality that you are interested in or refer to the New York OEM website at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/home/home.shtml> .

FIRST – Financial Industry Resilience, Security and Teamwork is a coalition of regional public and private partnerships that have formed within the financial sector to focus on homeland security and emergency management issues. These partnerships have formed organically in several cities or states. Recently, they are evolving from primarily financial organizations to a coalition of business organizations within a regional geographic area. Some of the benefits if a FIRST organization include:

- Sharing situational awareness and best practices
- Levering resources, expertise and relationships across a variety of business disciplines
- Emergency preparedness exercises
- Regular meetings and networking activities between public and private sector members

For more information, visit the websites of Chicago FIRST and *RPCFirst* at: <https://www.chicagofirst.org/> and <http://www.rpcfirst.org/> , respectively.

Establishing and Maintaining Public/Private Partnerships

Establishing and maintaining a public/private partnership and/or obtaining membership to an existing one require similar efforts. Considerations and suggestions are as follows:

- A. Research and identify existing or potential regional coalitions in your area:
 - a. Obtain contacts through professional organizations (e.g., Association of Contingency Planners, Chamber of Commerce, state and local departments of emergency management).
 - b. Sponsor, host or participate in emergency preparedness exercises, training or seminars to develop a network of first responder organizations and emergency professionals.
 - c. Use the internet (websites, blogs, and social media) and professional publications.
- B. For existing regional coalitions, plan for membership and the requirements to participate:
 - a. Budget of membership dues or fees, if any.

- b. Plan to attend meeting regularly and to host one occasionally.
- c. Plan resources to support or participate in exercises, training, seminars, etc.
- C. For new regional coalitions, plan and organize to get started:
 - a. Host a kickoff event and meeting to attract and solicit members.
 - b. Establish an organizational structure:
 - Leadership positions
 - Charter with mission, vision, goals and objectives
 - Define membership scope
 - Define membership commitment
 - c. Establish an outreach to identify and attract new members
 - d. Establish a calendar of meetings, events, exercises, seminars, expos, etc.
 - e. Occasionally, take a survey of members to determine their interests and needs.
- D. Some “best practices” for participation:
 - a. Training and seminars conducted by emergency professionals and experts
 - b. Guest speakers (i.e., local, state and national)
 - c. Tours of Department of the Emergency Management OEM Command Center and other public facilities that are used to support emergency response.
 - d. Where practical, site visits and tours hosted by member firms from the private sector.
 - e. “Shop Talk” informational sharing on topics of interest.
 - f. “Making friends before you need them”:
 - Growing the public/private partnership network (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, local authorities, local and state Offices of Emergency Management, etc.).
 - Establishing a virtual community via website, blog or social media group to stay connected with members and prospects.

Engaging the Public Sector in Test Planning and Execution

Planning is the key to engaging the public sector in testing and emergency preparedness drills. Some suggestions:

- A. Be proactive, get involved and volunteer. Support your local, regional and state organizations when they request business assistance and resources to plan or respond to an emergency.
- B. Refer to the best practices recommended under section D above. These actions will help to establish good working relationships with public sector organizations and provide the framework for greater opportunities and engagement.
- C. Help to establish the “business case” for public sector engagement:
 - a. Businesses own the majority of the infrastructure that can be used in an emergency.
 - b. Businesses have people resources (i.e., volunteers, CERT trained responders, etc.).
 - c. Opportunities to share best practices.
 - d. Shared responsibility for supporting the community before, during and after an emergency.

Additional References and Resources

Federal Emergency Management Agency
 State Offices and Agencies of Emergency Management
 Citizen Corps
 Financial Services Sector Coordinating Council
 Disaster News Network Volunteers

<http://www.fema.gov/>
<http://www.fema.gov/about/contact/statedr.shtml>
<http://www.citizencorps.gov/>
<https://www.fscc.org/fscc/>
<http://www.disastervolunteers.org/>