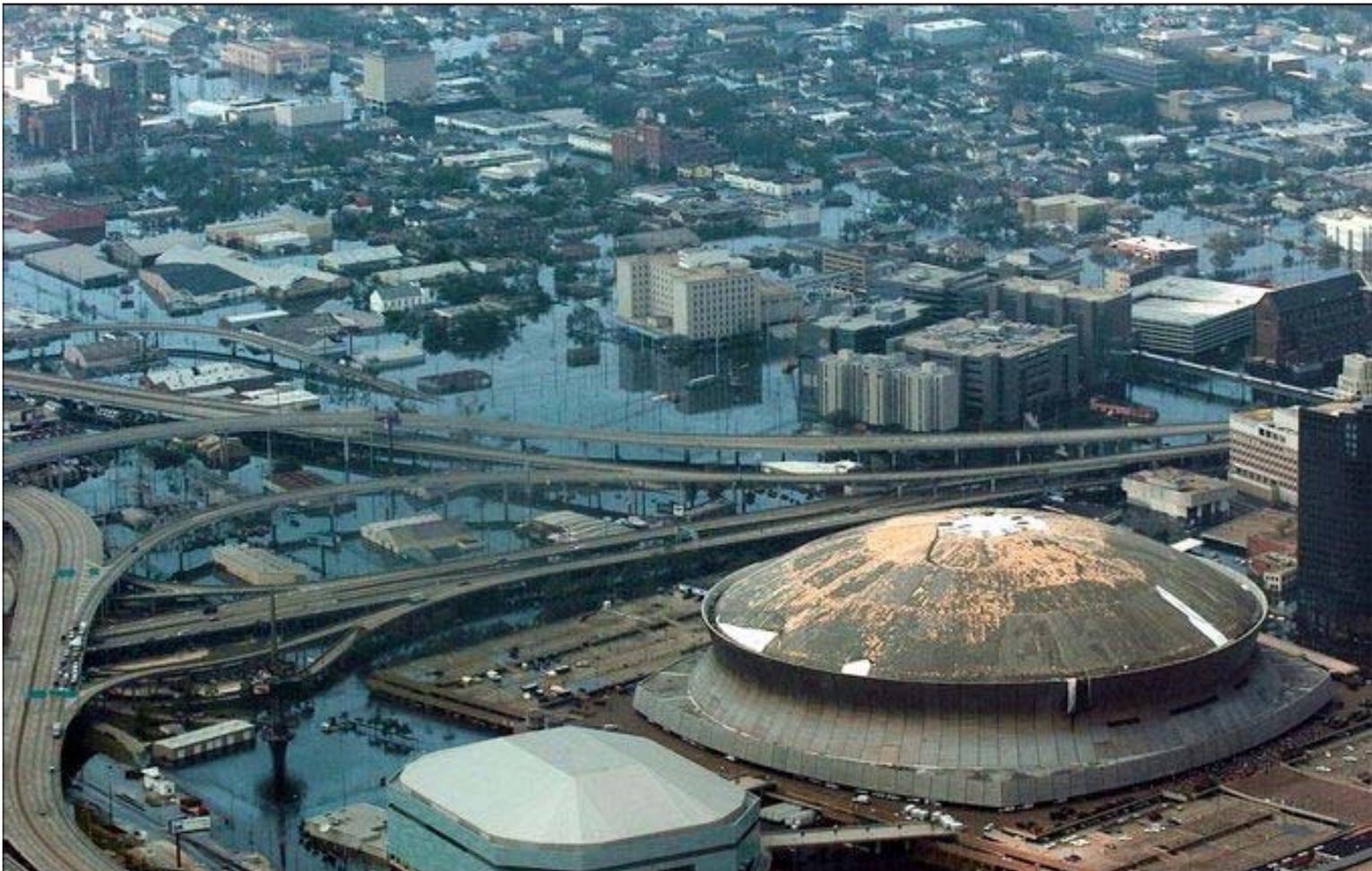


Managing Catastrophic Events: The Lesson of Katrina



Foreword

This paper is the result of many discussions held both in this office and in the field. It represents the views of the executive staff of the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and is not to be construed as representing the position of the Commission or its individual membership. Judy Mouton, Carle Jackson, and Michael Ranatza developed the original concepts contained herein. Carle Jackson wrote the text.

Introduction

Hurricane Katrina was not unique as a natural disaster. What is unique is the scope of the destruction, the number of victims involved, the loss of local governmental structure and communications, and the demands this placed on local, state, and federal law enforcement and recovery resources. It is imperative, given the loss of life and property, that we in the criminal justice community use this experience to improve our ability to respond to such emergencies in the future while we are working to meet the immediate needs in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama as well as the other states assisting in the sheltering of the evacuees. The experience with Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath provides us with a worst-case scenario that has exposed the strengths and weaknesses of our ability as a nation to handle large-scale disasters from whatever cause. The purpose of this paper is to identify some of the major problems encountered and to propose practical solutions. It is not intended as an “after action” report, nor does it offer criticism of any part of the rescue and recovery process. Our intent here is simply to find solutions to issues that have become dramatically apparent through this experience. The solutions brought forward here are well considered with a view toward solving problems through a pragmatic strategy that builds on the strengths of the response to this national tragedy.



Summary

The recommendations outlined below are based on the premise that an effective response to catastrophic events such as Hurricane Katrina must be based on state and local governmental control. The reason for this is the familiarity of state and local officials with the area, people, industries, and resources affected by such an event; a familiarity that federal officials (typically from other areas of the nation) would require months or even years to obtain. It is also based on the clear understanding that state and local governments seldom have the resources to develop the necessary capabilities on their own. Further, it would accomplish little if states and local governments simply developed these capabilities in isolation. There must be standardization to avoid unnecessary complications in moving resources across state and local government lines. One of the strengths of the Katrina experience was the outpouring of assistance received from law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, National Guard, and volunteer resources from across the nation. Properly organizing these resources is the most cost-effective way of building on the strength of the American spirit they so heroically demonstrated. The basic structure for this is in place with the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). But while EMAC provides a viable general structure, more must be done if that structure is to have the necessary resources behind it to make it work. In this effort it will be necessary to develop state and local capacity, insure a commonality of training and protocols, and establish standards of performance. These are the areas where Federal leadership and partnership are most greatly required.

What is required of the Federal government, then, is:

1. Resources to develop, maintain and deploy the necessary capabilities at the state and local level beyond those required for normal governmental operations;
2. Standardization of resources, training, and planning, so multi-jurisdictional efforts such as those required by a catastrophic event can be properly coordinated and rapidly delivered;
3. Establishment of standards and performance based funding that will ensure that dollars are well spent and that the various components are ready when they are needed. Of particular importance in this regard is the establishment of a mandatory training schedule for all response

- teams including full scale readiness exercises, and response planning and review for a variety of scenarios.
4. Providing technical assistance to state and local governmental agencies engaged in this effort.

The major recommendations of the report are organized by discipline. This is important because it reflects the proper use of expertise. It is also important for the contemplated Federal response, as agencies within the Federal Government already exist, with a proven track record, and with whom state and local governments are familiar. Making use of existing funding mechanisms and expertise in agencies such as the Department of Justice, Department of Education, the Department of Health, Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense is both more expeditious and flexible than the creation of a new bureaucracy. It also takes full advantage of the expertise and working relationships that have developed within the various disciplines involved.



Governance

Because the immediate response effort will likely involve resources from a number of different departments and levels of government, overall coordination should be vested in Emergency Response Commissions established in each state. Membership of such Commissions would include local law enforcement, corrections, judicial (including courts, prosecution, and defense), representatives from state and local government (i.e. Mayors, Governor, National Guard, OEP) as well as liaisons to other critical disciplines (e.g. fire, hospitals and health care, industry, transportation, education, social service, and other institutions representing vulnerable populations requiring special response resources) and including FEMA and recovery-related agencies. The purpose of this Commission is to plan and coordinate resources within a state in response to a catastrophic event or other disaster where resources external to the local government are required. Utilizing such a top-down structure allows for full participation by all stakeholders, and builds on the knowledge base of those closest to the problem. It also ensures that all participants are familiar with evacuation, rescue, and immediate response plans. The Commission would also govern training of criminal justice responders within the framework of national guidelines and training standards, and would hold annual training exercises to ensure the readiness of the rapid response teams described below.



Because response to a catastrophic event is a technical rather than a political issue during the first hours and days of a catastrophic event, the Executive Director of the Emergency Response Commission should be a Cabinet level or equivalent level position within state government, vested with the emergency powers of the Governor relative to law enforcement and corrections. This would include operational command over those National Guard forces designated by the Governor for law enforcement duty. The local law enforcement and correctional units participating in the response would become a taskforce also under the strategic command of the Executive Director, with tactical command residing at the local law enforcement level. Under such a structure, the Director generally assigns resources to work with specific local departments, and the local law enforcement agency takes operational command of units operating within its jurisdiction. This provides not only for local control with regional/statewide coordination, it also assigns a clear chain of responsibility and authority. The activities of any assigned unit fall under the local law enforcement agency to which they have been assigned. These provisions also establish a unified chain of command for overall operations and greatly enhance communications and coordination of effort. The Commission itself would establish a response team to advise the Director and assist in the coordination of all elements involved in the operation, composed of the heads of local departments within the affected area. The Liaisons to the Commission representing groups with special law enforcement needs would serve the critical role of providing a single point of contact for their primary working groups and the law enforcement operations. In this way, if there is a need for special population evacuation, rescue, or protection, the necessary resources would be dispatched in a timely fashion and other support services coordinated. The response team and command personnel would be located in a forward command center. The triggering mechanism for initiating these measures would be the declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor.

What makes this structure different from the OEP structure currently in place is that it establishes leadership at the state level while assigning tactical command to the local level. One of the lessons of Katrina is that leadership must precede command. Until leadership is established, command is not possible. Leadership at the state level requires that local leaders be brought into the process. It also requires that the local leaders involved have confidence in both the structure (i.e., it is responsive to local needs and

situations) as well as the technical (subject matter) expertise of the state level leadership. This also requires effective communications among all of the leaders involved before, during, and after a catastrophic event. While a Commission form of governance seems less efficient than a single “commander”, top down model, it is actually more efficient: Command only functions when people and agencies follow; they will not follow unless there is leadership; and leadership requires involvement, process, and communication. If any one of these elements is missing, command and control fail. The importance of the leadership role is heightened by the fact that in an emergency response where elements of many different agencies and disciplines are required, it is not always true that the leadership of the discrete units and agencies involved know or have confidence in a single commander, especially if that commander is from a different discipline. Because the Commission form of governance is participatory in nature and brings allied disciplines together throughout the process, it is far more efficient in establishing leadership under such conditions. Finally, it is critical that tactical command rest with local officials, since such a structure places field level control in the hands of those most familiar with the situation and conditions that exist, and provides for a more nimble response structure, able to adjust to changing conditions. The components of the proposed Commission form of governance are as follows:

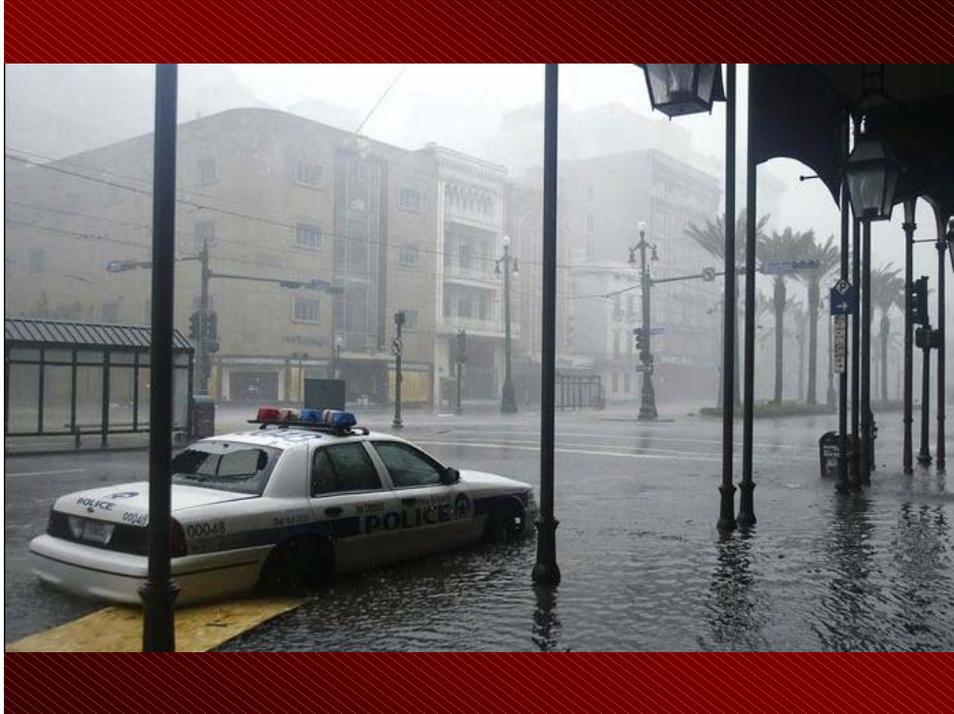


Law Enforcement

The critical role of law enforcement cannot be overestimated when considering a catastrophic event. A major concern in any catastrophic event is to establish adequate governmental presence to reassure the public and maintain order. Public confidence and a strong law enforcement presence are critical prerequisites to all other tasks; e.g., search and rescue, damage control, shelter, appraisal, and recovery.

1. **Command and Control:** The command and control structure must be clear, and should be state/local oriented. The reason for this is the familiarity of state and local officials with the area, people, industries, and resources affected by such a catastrophic event; a familiarity that federal officials (typically from other areas of the nation) would require months to obtain.

One of the major lessons of the Katrina disaster response was the need for clear command structure and coordination. While it is important to have a single unified plan for disaster response, such a plan does little good if it is not communicated to and accepted by all parties involved. The traditional OEP structure is ill suited to these purposes, especially when various branches and levels of government are involved in a rapid, large-scale deployment. The OEP model is best suited to recovery operations (i.e., sheltering, housing, medical, and rebuilding). Disaster response is primarily a local and state responsibility. Local resources are the first at the scene, and have the most information about the area (e.g., immediately available resources, location of key facilities, and potential hazards). State resources, including the National Guard, are generally second on the scene or have been prepositioned but still lack the detailed level of information possessed by the local responders. The third set of resources is typically federal, having the greatest distance to come, and even less familiarity with the area than state responders.



The command of a response effort therefore should reside first with local officials, with state officials playing a coordinating and support role, and federal officials playing a resource and multi-state coordination role.

2. Rapid Response Teams: When a catastrophic event occurs, a primary concern is positioning the necessary law enforcement resources on site immediately, with additional resources arriving within a six to twelve hour time window. To accomplish this several things must occur:
 - a. Create self-contained emergency response units in local law enforcement agencies with the following responsibilities:
 - i. Search and Rescue
 - ii. Maintenance of Public Order
 - iii. Disaster site control in conjunction with state and federal authorities when needed.
 - b. Train the members of these units in special law enforcement as well as search and rescue techniques applicable to a range of emergency situations (in this regard it is important that the training be standardized

- across the nation so these units can more effectively function together on scene);
- c. Conduct a statewide full scale readiness exercise involving all rapid response units in a state at least once per year with external peer scoring and debriefing;
 - d. Conduct a multi-state full scale readiness exercise involving all rapid response units in a multi-state region at least once every two years with external peer scoring and debriefing;
 - e. Properly equip the rapid response units, including interoperable communications, as well as distinctive vehicle and uniform markings so they may be readily identified;



- f. Develop and maintain a database on all personnel assigned to Rapid Response Teams (standard format including applicable credentialing and emergency contact information), location and status of all rapid deployment assets, and the capability for requesting and

alerting additional assets in real-time as may be required by events and circumstances.



3. Establish coordination teams designed to provide the necessary command and control structure for the Rapid Response Units. These teams should have common training and protocols, and should be properly equipped to remain in constant communications with all deployed units and with the primary command center. The responsibilities of these teams include:
 - i. Coordination of Rapid Response Units with each other and other (non-law enforcement) units in the field;
 - ii. Establishment of forward command and control center in advance of a catastrophic event if possible, and within two hours if not;
 - iii. Establish communications with field units and primary command and control center, serving as a

- coordinating authority for rapid response field units;
- iv. Tracking rapid response assets from time placed on alert status until arrival and through release;
- v. Immediate access to all databases described elsewhere in this paper;
- vi. Processing (commissioning) of law enforcement personnel from out of jurisdiction.

Communications

As communication is a key function for all elements engaged in a response effort it is treated separately, although it should be located at the forward law enforcement command center.

1. Self-contained mobile communications units should be developed, utilizing standardized equipment, and capable of dispatching, tracking, and controlling all first responder and rescue units in the field, as well as establishing multiple lines of communication with the primary command and control center. Such units must be compatible with all first responders from all levels of government (e.g., law enforcement, corrections, fire, emergency medical, National Guard, Coast Guard, and other military resources as may be dispatched to the area) and include redundant equipment capable of meeting a wide variety of conditions and needs. Such communications units must be equipped to establish reliable communications in the area affected by a catastrophic event. This includes both establishing a complete communications system, as was the need in the Katrina situation, or augmenting surviving communications assets in local departments. It should also carry a sufficient supply of communications hardware to properly equip any resources deployed into the area that do not already have the requisite communications capabilities.
2. Personnel manning the self-contained mobile communications centers should be cross-trained in the necessary disciplines (fire, law enforcement, emergency medical, and rescue) and should all possess proper certification in each required discipline.



3. Conduct a statewide full scale readiness exercise involving all rapid response units in a state at least once per year with external peer scoring and debriefing;
4. Conduct a multi-state full scale readiness exercise involving all rapid response units in a multi-state region at least once every two years with external peer scoring and debriefing;

Corrections

Inmates and other correctional populations pose a special problem in catastrophic event response. There are at least two dimensions to the problem: (a) providing security, control, and evacuation of existing correctional inmate populations when necessary, and (b) establishing temporary holding areas, booking process, and secure transport for persons arrested during and immediately following the event. To address these issues, the following is recommended:

1. Creation of Correctional Rapid Response Teams similar to those for law enforcement but including mobile booking operations and inmate

- transfer tracking, emergency jail facility equipment and emergency medical treatment/triage;
2. Train the members of these units in special emergency correctional as well as search and rescue techniques applicable to a range of emergency situations (in this regard it is important that the training be standardized across the nation so these units can more effectively function together on scene);
 3. Development of a standard inmate classification system to be used by all Correctional Rapid Response Teams;
 4. Correctional population evacuation plan including temporary secure housing in non-impact areas for all security levels of inmates, including special needs populations (e.g., medical, psychiatric) and correctional populations temporarily located outside of the correctional system at the time of the catastrophic event (e.g., inmates in court, hospitals, psychiatric units, work release, in transfer status or other program where the inmate is not physically located in the correctional institution at the time of an evacuation or transfer). The plan must include provisions for identification and tracking of all inmates evacuated;
 5. Emergency jail facility plan for all security levels of inmates, including special needs populations, in areas necessary for the proper functioning of law enforcement units maintaining order within the impact area of a catastrophic event. The plan must include provisions for the booking, processing and tracking of all persons arrested and brought to the emergency jail facility;
 6. A parallel structure should be created for Juvenile Correctional Populations. Planning in the juvenile area must include emergency detention, evacuation, sheltering, and tracking of all juveniles in legal custody of state or local juvenile authority (e.g., juvenile correctional centers, detention centers, community-based residential treatment facilities, and other specialized juvenile facilities and programs (including non-residential programs in cases where parents or guardians are not able to take custody of the child;



7. A plan should be developed for noncustodial special populations by the responsible correctional or juvenile department or agency. Such special populations would include sex offenders subject to registration in each state, as well as persons on probation, parole, or supervised good-time release. The State Sex Offender Registry must be current and available to any organization providing security at any shelter utilized for evacuees during a catastrophic event. (note: statutes may need to be modified to include identification by sex offenders subject to registration when entering any emergency shelter during a catastrophic event). Further, procedures must be developed for such special populations to be tracked during an evacuation process. Such procedures could include a mandatory check-in requirement, where sex offenders, and other under supervision are required to report to law enforcement when evacuated;
8. Creation of a standardized database on correctional and juvenile custodial populations in the affected area from custodial agency records should occur prior to the catastrophic event, or as soon after as practical. Local and State correctional agencies should take measures to ensure the survivability of current inmate security and health

- records. This will require the creation of a statewide joint state and local database with real time redundancy. This information should be immediately available to the Correctional and Juvenile Rapid Response Teams.
9. Conduct a statewide full scale readiness exercise involving all rapid response units in a state at least once per year with external peer scoring and debriefing;
 10. Conduct a multi-state full scale readiness exercise involving all rapid response units in a multi-state region at least once every two years with external peer scoring and debriefing.

Facilitating Rescue and Sheltering: Law Enforcement

The tracking of evacuation populations, especially hospital, nursing home, school, day-care, or other special population facilities is very important. A standard protocol, emergency shelter and processing facilities, must be established for special populations. Unaccompanied children, nursing home occupants, and hospital patients should be evacuated to specialized sites prior to assignment to other shelters. Medical screening/emergency treatment, identification, and tracking should be established before special populations are disbursed to other shelter facilities. Those requiring immediate medical attention should be transported directly to hospitals and tracking information obtained on arrival. Special medical areas should also be identified for persons rescued who present a need for psychiatric treatment. Finally, thought must be given to maintaining security within shelter populations. To accomplish these purposes the following is recommended as part of a more comprehensive evacuation and sheltering plan:

1. A database should be created that identifies:
 - a. Location, emergency contact information and status for all special population facilities within the impact area; e.g., schools, nursing homes, hospitals, clinics, daycare centers, and homeless shelters.
 - b. Location, contact, and status for all sites that may manufacture, produce, store, or utilize hazardous materials that could be compromised during a catastrophic event;
 - c. Location, contact, and status for all sites that manufacture, store or offer for retail sale firearms, ammunition, explosives, or

similar products that could be of concern during or immediately following a catastrophic event;

- d. Location, contact, status, and potential issue information on all other sites or operations identified by federal, state or local OEP officials as representing facilities of possible special concern;



- e. Location, contact, and status of all shelters of last resort, evacuation transfer areas, and other emergency assembly or staging areas designated within the impacted area as identified by proper OEP authority or as may develop ad hoc within the impact area during or after the catastrophic event;
- f. Current (real time) information on evacuation routes and their status;
- g. Current (real time) information on special problems and response status; e.g. looting, violence, fire, hazardous material release, crowd control, emergency supply and evacuation efforts;

- h. Current (real time) information on changing weather conditions, and emerging emergency situations (flooding, winds or wind shift, compromised water or sanitation, etc.).
2. Victim and witness tracking is also an essential element in a large-scale catastrophic event such as Hurricane Katrina. The proper functioning of the criminal justice system in days immediately following a catastrophic event depends on the ability of the courts to process criminal cases. This cannot be done if prosecutors are unable to locate key witnesses and victims. Tracking of this population can be easily accomplished by adding this capability to existing victim notification systems. A simple enhancement to such systems as LAVNS (Louisiana Victim Notification System) that allows for victims and witnesses to call in and register their location utilizing their secure personal identification number, would both assist prosecutors in the processing of criminal cases and law enforcement in providing security for these individuals.
3. A security plan should be developed for all shelters that include identification and tracking of evacuees (to assist in reuniting families and providing location information to the Red Cross or governmental entity to facilitate this purpose), identification of special correctional populations (e.g., sex offenders, persons under felony bail or bond status or subject to a restraining or protective order) as may be among evacuees in a shelter along with a plan to immediately notify shelter security. In large scale evacuations consideration should be given to the use of undercover law enforcement assets to control potential violence and narcotics use/trafficking. Such undercover operations can be made part of the law enforcement rapid response teams.
4. Special attention should be given to providing security and essential services for shelters of last resort. Since such shelters are likely to have a more volatile and traumatized population than other shelters, it is important that adequate numbers of properly trained law enforcement, medical and mental health professionals be exclusively assigned to them, and a command and communications structure developed before opening. Essential resources must be prepositioned in such shelters and a plan for their evacuation as soon as conditions permit established. Staffing of shelters of last resort must be a priority, and careful consideration must be given to insuring the safety and welfare of persons housed in them.
5. Predetermined emergency evacuation sites for special needs populations to facilitate rescue and immediate transport to appropriate

- facilities, e.g., hospitals, triage centers, and social service centers for unaccompanied children.
6. Predetermined emergency evacuation and shelter sites for First Responder families is critical for effective response. A major lesson of Katrina is that first responder personnel cannot function at best efficiency if they are worried about their own families. The role of law enforcement, fire, EMS, and other front line personnel is highly stressful. In situations where these local responders are uncertain about the welfare and even survival of their families, that stress level is raised to the breaking point. During Katrina this point was tragically made when a New Orleans police officer committed suicide after finding his family dead in their home. Other officers left their duty assignments to check on and evacuate their families. Such conduct, while not to be condoned, is certainly understandable and predictable. Evacuating and sheltering families ahead of time, or having a preset plan when the disaster is of such a nature as to provide no advance warning, is, therefore, critical to the first responder role.

In establishing a First Responder Family Evacuation and Shelter plan, special attention must be given to insuring that the families are out of harms way: When time permits this involves relocating them out of the disaster area; when it does not, then they must be placed in the most safe and secure environment available. In addition, it is necessary that communications with these shelters be available through the tactical command headquarters so that responders can be informed of their families' condition. In order to insure that such plans are executed effectively, families should be included in the annual catastrophic event scenario training program. Finally, it is important that crisis counseling be available to the families while in shelter, helping them cope with the stress of having their loved ones in harms way during an unpredictable catastrophic event.

Courts

In a protracted catastrophic event much of the infrastructure of government and the criminal justice system is destroyed. When persons in secure custody are evacuated to alternative facilities, courthouses and records destroyed or rendered inaccessible, judicial personnel (including clerks, judges, prosecutors, and defenders) are evacuated and scattered across a wide area,

the criminal justice system cannot function. At the same time, constitutional and statutory safeguards remain in place that require judicial or prosecutorial action within fixed timeframes. When the destruction of court records, evidence rooms, and loss of contact with witnesses and parties to a case exacerbate this situation, the potential for a criminal justice disaster and the accompanying loss of public confidence is great. Therefore, provisions must be made in advance to carry on the operations of the criminal justice system under such circumstances.

In such a major catastrophic event the loss of Courts, Prosecutor's Offices, Indigent Defense Offices and other Court related functions should be anticipated and alternatives planned in non-impact areas. Such alternatives should be operational within two days of the event in order to permit the proper operation of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. In addition, however, rapid deployment teams consisting of judges, prosecutors, indigent defense, clerks of court and the necessary support staff should be created for



deployment in conjunction with emergency jail facilities which may be within the impacted area and to accommodate the needs of host correctional facilities as well as such matters as may be required to ensure the safety of

non-correctional populations (e.g. the enforcement of restraining and protective orders). Judicial Rapid Response Team tasked with the former would deploy immediately with the Correctional Rapid Response Team in charge of the emergency jail facility. The second Judicial Response Team of proper jurisdiction should also be in place within two days in a non-impact area to accommodate the processing and proper assignment of such non-violent inmates evacuated from jail facilities that can be released in cases where the demand for emergency secure correctional custody may be of such a magnitude as to compromise the security or operations of host correctional facilities, as well as taking such judicial or prosecutorial actions as may be necessary to protect other vulnerable populations (e.g., enforcement of protective and restraining orders).



Plans for two types of Rapid Deployment teams and the plan for long term alternative court operations should include appropriate operations housing and conferencing areas, as well as the preservation of Court information and records. In this regard it is recommended that all court systems develop the capability of redundant, off-site, real-time (or as near to it as practical) storage of their automated records and information systems. Separate plans

should also be developed for the preservation of vital manual records assuming the total destruction of the court facility.

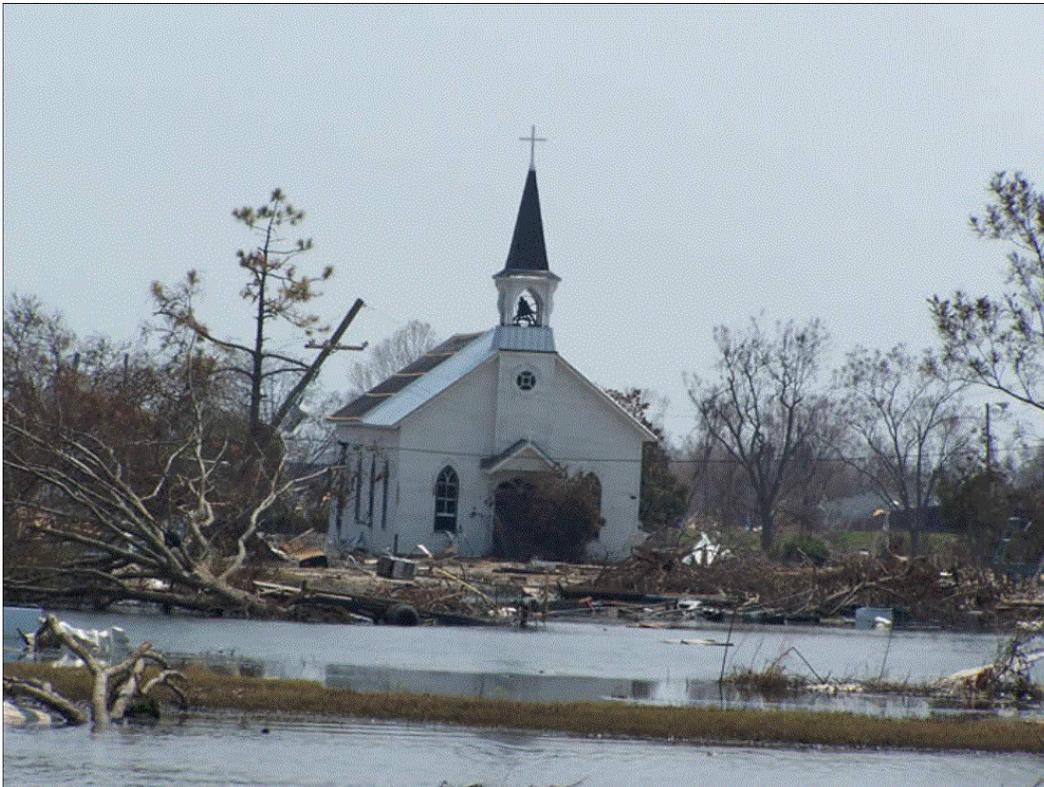
Note: Similar arrangements must be made for the operation of specialized courts (e.g., Juvenile Courts, City and other courts of limited jurisdiction, Traffic Courts, and Civil Courts). Clerks of Court should give special attention to the preservation of such civil records as may be necessary for the conduct of business during the recovery process.

Support Services

In addition to the actions outlined above, two critical sets of support services must be made available to the criminal justice system and state/local government in the affected areas:

1. Specially trained public relations/information personnel should be dispatched with the rapid response teams. Since public confidence in the ability of government to properly function and take care of the public needs is so great in a catastrophic event, communication with the public and media is of high importance. These personnel must be kept fully informed of operations and situations as may arise at the field level, keep their counterparts at the primary command center informed, and be available to respond to questions from the media. Rumor and exaggerated “eyewitness” accounts can create panic, lawlessness, and a loss of public confidence. Great care must be taken to insure that these personnel are properly trained, coordinate with the primary command center public information personnel, are open and honest with the media at all times, and are fully informed as to changing conditions at the field level as well as command decisions from the overall Emergency Response personnel.
2. Training in catastrophic event media communications should be provided for state and local elected officials to assist them in maintaining public confidence and calm. Due to the lack of field level communications during Katrina, state, federal, and local officials were placed in a position where accurate, timely information was not available. This permitted apocryphal and often highly misleading and inaccurate stories to dominate the media, overcoming efforts at effective public information. This made it very difficult to maintain public confidence at a time when it was most needed. Public officials

were placed in the difficult position of responding to depictions of events by the media without proper information. While it is not possible to mandate training for elected officials, it should be offered to them. Further, it is necessary that proper communications be maintained, keeping officials informed of emerging situations and allowing their staffs the ability to check information through reliable sources on the scene.



3. Critical stress assessment teams should be positioned and available to assist first responders, officials, and other disaster recovery personnel. Consideration should be given to including such teams in the make-up of emergency shelter personnel to accommodate the needs of evacuees.
4. Specially trained and highly qualified (ASCLAD certified) Forensic Teams should be developed to help local officials secure evidence before and following a catastrophic event. In Katrina, for example, evidence rooms were compromised in several large jurisdictions, further complicating the prosecution of major cases. If time permits, personnel highly trained in both the preservation of evidence and chain of custody should move evidence in a secure manner out of the

disaster area to a criminalistics laboratory or other suitable location. If time does not permit, such units must be available to assist local officials in securing evidence in place and recovering evidence as soon as conditions permit. In either event, each agency having custody of evidence to be used in a criminal proceeding must have a plan that meets ASCLAD and legal standards for the preservation of evidence and chain of custody.



It is also recommended that officials with responsibility over evidence rooms consider placing evidence in portable storage devices, such as PODS, within a climate controlled environment so as to facilitate the movement of evidence in a crisis. Consideration should also be given to the method of transport, so as to insure proper climate control necessary to preserve evidence. All agencies should seek the advice of their criminalistics laboratory when making and executing such plans.

Training

A vital component to any of the foregoing recommendations is training. Training in this context should be standardized, evaluated against after action reports and revised as necessary. It should also include opportunities

for units from multiple agencies to train together, and provide for annual exercises. In order to make the training performance-based, participants should be required to pass a standardized test, including both written and field application components. In addition to individual testing, annual exercises should be conducted and each participating unit evaluated for performance. Individuals or units not making the grade should be eliminated from the program.

In terms of content, the training program should include basic emergency law enforcement or corrections, hazardous materials situations, bomb, search and rescue technique, and specialized training for field command and tactics. The training should cover a variety of event situations including terrorist attack, hurricane, flood, and earthquake depending on the needs of the region.

Because potential catastrophic events vary across the nation, it is recommended that regional training sites be utilized. Such sites could provide the standardized training set along with training focused on the law enforcement challenges anticipated in specific types of catastrophic event applicable to their area.

The regional training centers should have sufficient training resources to permit both classroom and live tactical operations training. Such centers should also be utilized to coordinate the annual disaster preparedness exercises so as to provide a more realistic environment for the officers trained.

