



Real-Time Risk



TIMELY NEWS AND TIPS TO HELP REDUCE RISK

September 2019

UNDERPREPARED: OREGON'S EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

By Katie Durfee, CIS Senior Risk Management Consultant

For many leaders of Oregon's cities and counties, experiencing a disaster may seem a little far-fetched.

Most people operate under the misconception, 'it will never happen to us. However, with climate change leading to more wildfires, the threat of earthquakes — as well as cyberattacks and active shooters — we're facing a new reality of so many risks requiring our attention. Strategic disaster planning has never been more urgent.

How emergency planning and response capabilities are established in advance of a potential disaster, sets the tone for our public entities and communities. It's all about being prepared for and building resiliency to respond quickly so you can respond and recover faster. To recover quickly, we must pre-plan and train.

Having worked for a rural county before coming to CIS, I experienced two federally declared emergencies within a two-month period.

Both events exposed some unanticipated vulnerabilities.

I learned many important lessons through those crises. Both experiences illustrated how an agency can lose response time and money because of a lack of being properly prepared.

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But disaster planning doesn't have to be overly complicated and CIS is ready to be your partner — supporting you in these critical efforts.

Good planning and training can make a difference

To prepare for a disaster, a crucial element of good planning is thoughtful training. This comes in several forms, one of which is providing staff with the knowledge of consistent emergency terminology and communications.

Knowing the right terms is very necessary for operating between multi-jurisdictional levels. Staff can learn these terms by taking courses through the FEMA National Incident Command System Training (NIMS).

Every on-line FEMA course, which meet the recommended training requirement for Homeland Security Grants (HSG), has been added to CIS' Learning Center.

It's equally important to have new and seasoned senior leadership take the assigned curriculum, too. The CIS Learning Center also offers: FEMA IS-908, Emergency Management for Senior Officials and FEMA IS-2200, Basic Operation Center Functions.

You can also train for unexpected situations as a team by regularly hosting Tabletop Disaster Exercises. Having a controlled environment to explore potential threats and challenges — instead of experiencing them during the actual disaster response — is invaluable.

The first step is to plan by establishing the essential framework needed to respond to a disaster through the development of a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Your designated CIS risk management consultants can lend a hand and review COOP Plans. The State

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of Oregon also offers a software service at no charge, for COOP development. A current contract makes it available to all tribes, counties, and incorporated cities.

The CIS Risk Resource Library is a great tool for you.

All sample templates for tabletop exercise design and additional emergency-related documents — are in our resource library. These documents can help bring clarity to important tasks such as assisting with donation management, shelter management, records retention and finance-related resources for FEMA projects.

Volunteers are invaluable during disasters

The power of your community volunteers cannot be overstated. By including them in your planning efforts, they'll help you when you need them most. And by including them upfront, you build their confidence. In addition, it gives them a sense of ownership, which helps during the initial response as well as during the recovery period.

One of the best ways to involve community volunteers is through your Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTS). CERTS training prepares citizens on the basics of fire suppression, light search and rescue, medical triage and grief management. The training further enables them to work alongside or supplement your existing pool of emergency responders.

Other important tools

Another important tool is The Map Your Neighborhood program (http://www.preporegon.org/MYN_overview). The program readies

Financing for Rural Emergency Response Facility Financing Available Through USDA

Applications are accepted year-round

The USDA Rural Development offers financing for the construction or upgrade of police stations, 911 dispatch centers, fire departments, and more through the Community Facilities loan and grant program and loan guarantee program.

This financing is available to rural towns with populations of 20,000 or less.

Direct Loan & Grant Program in Oregon: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/> or

Guaranteed Loan Program in Oregon: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-guaranteed-loan-program/> or

Very small communities — with populations of 5,000 or less and that have limited financial resources — may receive priority for funding.



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neighborhoods with simple disaster techniques for residents to take care of each other until emergency responders can arrive.

Of course, HAM Operators play a critical role too and will always be needed when communications are down.

Contact a county emergency manager for more information on citizen response initiatives. A contact list of county emergency manager's and common disaster-responding government agencies can be found on the Risk Resource Library.

What services do CIS provide when disasters strike

A "disaster" is anything that prevents your entity doing what it normally does. It can be a fire or loss of power to a broken water line.

When a disaster strikes your community, CIS has contracted with Agility Recovery, which is a free service provided through CIS property coverage. Agility Recovery is available 24/7, to provide equipment and other resources necessary to get your operations back up and running.

Another valuable tool on the myAgility website is the Alert Notification System. This can be used any time to send a text message or email to anyone in a pre-determined contact database. It can even be used to inform staff about inclement weather so it's not limited to only disaster situations.

A new and more robust remodel of myAgility will be revealed in 2020. The new site is a cloud-based platform called Proparis, which will offer management of incidents through mobile application that has bi-directional mass emergency messaging, tracks employees during emergencies, offers exchange of incident response documents and cybersecurity services. A preview of the program will be available at the 2020 CIS Annual Conference.

Facebook's Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg best described Resiliency, "as the strength and speed of our response to adversity — we can build it."

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month and now is the time to prepare. CIS is your strong partner and supporter of your resiliency efforts. Take the chaos out of disaster by planning now. Remember, your communities are depending on you!



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Katie joined CIS as a risk management consultant in April 2017. She came to CIS from Oregon City where she served in the city manager's office, overseeing risk management, claims and the coordination of emergency preparedness training. Prior to joining Oregon City, Katie served as a Chief Deputy County Clerk for Valley County, Idaho and managed the County's Risk Management program. She has previously served as the President for the Idaho Chapter of PRIMA, as well as participated on several National PRIMA committees, including the Leadership Development Committee. Katie has more than fourteen years of local government experience. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resource Management from Colorado Technical University.

