



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Operations Committee

DATE: September 3, 2010

FR: Executive Director

RE: Regional Emergency Management Program: Report on Regional Exercise

Background

In October 2008, the Commission adopted MTC Resolution No. 3873, which approved the Regional Transportation Emergency Management Plan (RTEMP) as the Bay Area's tool for ongoing regional all-hazards planning and coordination among transportation agencies. The RTEMP provides guidance to MTC, Caltrans, California Highway Patrol, San Francisco Water Emergency Transportation Authority, and the largest Bay Area transit operators for coordinating response and recovery efforts and allocating assets to restore basic mobility following a major regional disaster.

The RTEMP is tested through annual exercises to identify areas for improvement and to share best practices among the participants. As such, the RTEMP is a "living" document, suitable for updates and improvements in response to experiences gained through exercises and in actual application during real emergencies.

2010 Emergency Preparedness Exercise

On May 18, 2010, the RTEMP was tested in conjunction with the State's annual Golden Guardian Exercise. The exercise scenario was based on a terrorism event that included explosions occurring at a refinery in Benicia and at the Port of Redwood City. Subsequently, a suspicious package was found at a VTA Light Rail station followed by an explosion on an AC Transit bus parked at a BART station. All of these events heightened the vulnerability of the transportation network under a port terrorism scenario. The 2010 RTEMP Exercise primarily tested transportation agencies on three target capabilities:

- Critical Infrastructure Protection;
- Restoration of Lifelines; and
- Emergency Operations Center Management.

This year, 10 transportation agencies and more than 200 people participated in the annual exercise. As part of the conduct of the exercise, each agency activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and demonstrated their ability to: (1) implement service suspension and service

resumption procedures; (2) follow shift-change procedures; and (3) manage their EOC staff and EOC activities. Participants were also able to test agency-specific objectives. For example, MTC used the exercise as an opportunity to enhance our working relationship with Caltrans by physically situating our EOC adjacent to the Caltrans EOC.

Lessons Learned

Debriefings were held at each EOC following the exercise to identify lessons learned and best practices. Based on these discussions, an After Action Report and Improvement Plan was developed for each agency. The After Action Report recognized progress in some areas such as the following:

- Agencies were able to successfully cold-start EOCs with adequate staffing;
- Situation status summaries were provided to MTC in a timely, accurate manner by most agencies via email; and
- Agencies that chose to exercise shift-change procedures did so successfully.

Improvement Plans recommended agency-specific improvement tasks such as:

- Create procedures for drivers to secure vehicles in preparation for local law enforcement inspections;
- Provide training for EOC staff to develop comprehensive Incident Action Plans;
- Develop a system for tracking vehicles that have been swept and cleared for improvised explosive devices.

In addition, the following “regional” improvements were recommended to enhance the region’s emergency transportation coordination efforts:

1. Explore the need for regional protocols to guide the suspension and resumption of services among transit service providers following a region-wide terrorist attack on the transportation network.
2. Collaborate with agencies to formalize the regional conference call at the start of any regional incident so that every agency can be included in the process to share and receive information as soon as possible.
3. Collaborate with agency Public Information Officers (PIOs) during the regional conference call to initiate a Joint Information Center (JIC)/Joint Information System (JIS) to ensure a coordinated regional message is developed for the public.
4. Explore the need to standardize procedures for electronically sharing the Situational Status Report or the Regional Summary Report.

The exercise demonstrated the need to provide ongoing support for testing the RTEMP and for engaging the transportation agencies in responding to and recovering from natural or man-made disasters.

Steve Heminger