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News Release

National Response Framework Is Not a Good Replacement for the NRP

August 9, 2007(Falls Church, Va.) – The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) urges the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to work with local and state emergency managers as it rewrites the National Response Plan. IAEM has reviewed the controversial National Response Framework released to state emergency officials in early August and obtained by the *Congressional Quarterly*.

“A framework is not a plan,” stated Michael D. Selves, IAEM president and emergency manager for Johnson County Emergency Management in Olathe, Kan. “While a streamlined, executive summary is often part of a complex planning document, it cannot substitute for the detailed plan needed by the folks who must do the work at the local level.”

The National Response Plan is a guide to how federal, state and local governments and private and non-profit groups work together during emergencies. The 427-page plan that was finalized in 2004 was considered by many to be overly complicated and difficult to understand and execute. Therefore, DHS undertook a rewrite of the plan in collaboration with emergency managers. The collaboration, however, has been rewritten by DHS and a 71-page draft was released to state officials for review. “What does it say when FEMA brings together experts in disaster planning from across the nation, has them spend numerous hours dealing with the complexities of disaster, and then throws out their opinions based on decisions made by a small group within the DHS?” asked Selves.

IAEM understands that a final version will be released later this year for a formal 30-day review by state and local officials and interested parties. IAEM welcomes the opportunity to conduct a detailed review of the framework at that time and provide formal comments. In our review of the draft framework released in August, IAEM concludes that it is not adequate to serve as a replacement for the National Response Plan. It ignores one phase of emergency management completely: mitigation. It provides neither the depth nor the substance needed. “Disasters are, by their nature, complex events that require coordination and buy-in,” stated Selves. “You can write something slick and simple that looks nice or you can do the real work of tackling the hard issues in consultation with the essential stakeholders.”

IAEM urges DHS to reinvent the framework prior to releasing it for the 30-day comment period. In particular, IAEM suggests that the May document be revisited and that the earlier collaboration between FEMA and disaster planning experts from around the country be considered in the development of a final document.

The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) is a non-profit organization consisting of nearly 4,000 emergency management professionals from local, state and the federal governments, military, private industry, and volunteer organizations. IAEM has consistently promoted the goals of saving lives and protecting property during emergencies and disasters since its founding in 1952 as the U.S. Civil Defense Council.

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