



**Testimony of Larry Gispert, President  
International Association of Emergency Managers  
Before the  
Ad Hoc Subcommittee on State, Local & Private Sector Preparedness  
Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee  
U.S. Senate  
On  
Mission Possible: FEMA's Future Preparedness Planning  
September 24, 2008**

Chairman Pryor, Ranking Member Sununu and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to present testimony on this critically important topic.

I am Larry Gispert, the Director of Emergency Management for Hillsborough County Florida. Hillsborough County is on the West Coast of Florida and has the City of Tampa as its county seat. The county's population is approximately 1.2 million. I currently serve as the President of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) and am testifying on their behalf. I have 28 years in the emergency management field with 15 as the Hillsborough County Director and have also served as President of the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association.

IAEM has over 4,000 members including emergency management professionals at the state and local government levels, tribal nations, the military, colleges and universities, private business and the nonprofit sector in the United States and in other countries. Most of our members are U.S. city and county emergency managers who perform the crucial function of coordinating and integrating the efforts at the local level to prepare for, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all types of disasters including terrorist attacks. Our membership includes emergency managers from large urban areas as well as rural areas.

We believe that the high potential for disasters and crises in our country demands that we execute "mission possible" -- an effective national system of emergency management. This national system needs to consist of strong partners at the federal, state, and local levels. It is our belief that this mission is most easily realized through making FEMA, once again, an independent agency reporting directly to the President. In the absence of this structural change, we believe success is not impossible, but will certainly require more effort coupled with a vigilant Congress.

At the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) annual meeting in Portland, Oregon on September 10, 2008, Robert M. (Mike) Walker, former FEMA Deputy Director, observed that the current situation at the Department of Homeland Security, "...is like requiring the Department of Defense to do both war-fighting and diplomacy." I think Mr. Walker brings this issue up because the creation of DHS resulted in the requirement to perform different and sometimes incompatible goals. Walker goes on to suggest that the missions of the Department of Defense and the Department of State could never be combined – and neither should consequence and crisis management.

After Hurricane Katrina, IAEM endorsed a number of critical elements for achieving a strong FEMA. They are:

- Maximum amount of access of the FEMA Director to the White House.
- FEMA clearly responsible for coordination of the Federal response to disasters
- Adequate funding, resources, and personnel for FEMA that cannot be reallocated without legislation.
- Experienced, qualified and knowledgeable leadership in all key FEMA positions.
- A culture of empowerment established and maintained within FEMA that promotes the maximum level of autonomy and supports the independent actions necessary to deal with the consequences of disaster.
- The Principal Federal Official (PFO) position abolished, as it leads to confusion.
- The FEMA Regions strengthened.
- Opportunities ensured for local emergency managers to have meaningful participation in the policy development process.
- A return to established emergency management doctrine – all hazards, integrated, all phases (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery). The entire Preparedness mission returned to FEMA.

These elements remain important, and we strongly urge their adoption by the next administration. In particular, IAEM would like to emphasize the importance of highly qualified leaders for FEMA – both in Washington and in the Regions – who understand the basic tenants of emergency management and have experience relevant to their position.

IAEM has a strong preference for FEMA leaders in the next administration to have been emergency managers at the State and local level.

### **Involvement in policy initiatives**

The next administration should continue FEMA's recent noteworthy efforts to involve state and local emergency managers in policy development. Not too long ago, I gently reminded our partners in FEMA that if they wanted us to be there at the crash landing, we should be a part of the take off. I am pleased to say that there appear to be fewer crash landings recently – and we'd like to think this is a direct result of being more involved in the take off. Some examples of our recent involvement in policy initiatives include

FEMA reaching out to us on the Integrated Planning System (IPS), disaster policy changes, guidance for the Emergency Operations Center grant program, the Cost to Capability effort, and the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

We particularly appreciate the inclusion of State and local emergency management practitioner representatives on the National Advisory Council (NAC) and the Regional Advisory Councils (RAC).

We believe another important lesson has been learned by DHS / FEMA – that discussion with the States alone is not the same thing as discussion with the States and local governments. We strongly recommend the next Administration adopt this lesson early in its planning efforts.

We believe that these are key lessons – and that they deserve to be noted and passed on to the next administration, allowing them the opportunity to continue building these partnerships and relationships. Ultimately, this will allow each of us as individual team members charged with protecting the lives and property of our citizens to form a more efficient team.

### **All hazards focus**

We urge the new administration to keep the focus on all hazards – of which terrorism is only one. While terrorism is an incident to which we are vulnerable it is certainly not the most likely disaster to occur. That honor probably belongs to the forces of wind and water – whether floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, or more.

### **Functioning during transition**

Concerns have been raised regarding ability of FEMA to function before new political leadership is in place. We would certainly hope that the new administration will nominate a highly qualified FEMA Administrator as soon as possible after the election. And we would urge appropriate but rapid action by this Committee in considering that nominee. However, FEMA has many well seasoned civil service professionals who have been with FEMA for many years and they are the ones who make the agency run on a day-to-day basis. They will continue the agency operations as they have done in previous transitions. Nancy Ward, a civil servant who has been selected by FEMA to be prepared to act as administrator in the interim period, is a highly regarded professional with many years of experience.

### **The future of the emergency management profession**

Strong State and local emergency managers are a critical element of the future success of our National Emergency Management System. In order to enhance the capacity of the profession, there are a number of critical elements that the new administration should embrace and promote. They are:

- The Principles of Emergency Management (POEM) initiative. This initiative was undertaken to provide a universal doctrine of emergency management. The document describing the initiative in detail is attached and incorporated herein by reference. The elements of POEM are designed to promote emergency management which is comprehensive, and not focused on one type of disaster; progressive; risk-driven; integrated; collaborative; coordinated; flexible; and, professional.
- The Emergency Management Institute. One of the crown jewels of the emergency management profession is the Emergency Management Institute. More recently, however, EMI has had neither adequate financial resources nor academic focus to fulfill its vital role. We must provide both of these elements in order to return to the established doctrine of integrated emergency management. In addition, the Higher Education Program – which currently works with more than 130 universities and colleges offering degree programs in the field – will be an essential element to producing future well-educated and degreed emergency management professionals. EMI must be viewed as the depository of all knowledge concerning emergency management. In order to accomplish this EMI must continually update their course materials and remain vigilant as the profession goes through constant change. This level of attention will require adequate budgetary support above and beyond current levels.
- Certification and Accreditation. Two established and mature standards – one for personnel and one for programs – are the Certified Emergency Manager® (CEM) credential and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program. Taken together, these programs represent the consensus of the emergency management community on established professional emergency management standards.

### **Local preparedness**

Our communities face different risks across the Nation, and have different needs. That's why it is so important that the guidance for grants needs to allow locals the maximum amount of flexibility possible. One size simply does not fit all.

I am aware that this subcommittee has been particularly interested in Citizen and Community Preparedness.

I believe that there is a role for the federal government here – to provide support in these activities for me, as a local government emergency manager, The 1.2 million citizens of my jurisdiction have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared to respond to any disaster that may confront them. It is my primary role to help them prepare for these disasters. Toward that end, my office does 200 or more public education events each year. What would really help us is for FEMA to provide tools for us to use in this vitally important mission.

We need messages – derived from state and local government emergency managers – that are available nation-wide. We need professionally developed Public Service Announcements and other messages that the typical local government emergency management agency is not sufficiently resourced to provide.

We jointly need to encourage personal responsibility and sustainability. Every message that goes out across the nation should refer citizens with specific questions or wanting more information to the local government emergency manager.

Ultimately, I believe the responsibility of FEMA toward community preparedness needs to be concentrated in support to the local government emergency manager with the availability of publications to hand out at community events, Public Safety Announcements for local media, and other tools to help us increase community and individual preparedness for all hazards. We need tools to help us reach those with special needs. We have the audience, but we need help from FEMA with the tools.

We need to jointly work toward making our citizens survivors instead of victims. A survivor does everything within their power to mitigate the problems being presented by the disaster. Some citizens are not able to help themselves – but the general population is more than capable of doing so. A survivor never asks, “Where is my assistance?” Instead, a survivor asks, “How can I help with the problems?” Survivors act as force multipliers – victims are liabilities.

I have evacuated my jurisdiction on several occasions for pending hurricanes. On every occasion a significant percentage does not follow the evacuation orders. These non-evacuees will wind up getting injured or killed as a result of the effects of the storm and I will forever wonder what I could have done differently to have gotten them to evacuate.

### **Continuing Post Katrina Reform Act Implementation**

We urge that Congress continue to monitor the implementation of the Post Katrina Reform Act.

Congress made it clear when the Post Katrina Reform Act was passed that they want a strong FEMA with an Administrator with clear authority for managing all aspects of disasters and emergencies. Some specific examples from the Act which we believe are not being followed include:

Section 611 (12) (B) is of particular importance. This amended the Homeland Security Act of 2002 by “striking the matter preceding paragraph (1)” which contained the language, “the Secretary acting through...” and inserted instead the following language. “In General – The Administrator shall provide Federal Leadership necessary to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from or mitigate against a natural disaster, act of terrorism and other man-made disaster – including...managing such response.” Congress acted intentionally to transfer these responsibilities from the Secretary to the Administrator.

## Section 503 Federal Emergency Management Agency

(b)(2) Specific Activities – In support of the primary mission of the Agency, the Administrator –

(A) lead the Nation’s efforts to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against the risk of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters, including catastrophic accidents.

(H) develop and coordinate the implementation of a risk-based, all hazards strategy for preparedness that builds on those common capabilities necessary to respond to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters while also building the unique capabilities necessary to respond to specific types of incidents that pose the greatest risk to our Nation

Section 503 (c)(4)(A) In General – The Administrator is the principal advisor to the President, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary for all matters relating to emergency management in the United States.

Sec. 503 (c) (5) Cabinet Status –

(A) In General – The President may designate the Administrator to serve as a member of the Cabinet in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

(B) Retention of Authority – Nothing in the paragraph shall be construed as affecting the authority of the Secretary under this Act.

We believe that DHS frequently and mistakenly quotes Section 502(c)(5)(B) regarding the authority of the Secretary and the Administrator as being applicable across the entire act when, in fact, it is limited in scope only to paragraph (5). We strongly request the committee to provide continual oversight of DHS on these matters to ensure they are following the clear and direct law on these issues.

Congress also rejected the DHS Stage 2 Reorganization and clearly and unambiguously moved all Preparedness functions and personnel to FEMA. IAEM believes that Section 506 (c) (1) and (2) of the Homeland Security Act as amended by the Post Katrina Reform Act clearly prohibits the transfer of any asset, function or mission from FEMA without a specific Act of Congress. A major function of FEMA is to rebuild relationships with State and local officials. Therefore, the Intergovernmental Affairs function assumes a much higher level of importance. Despite the clear prohibition on moving this function from FEMA, we understand there are numerous positions performing this vital role still under the National Protection and Programs Directorate (outside of FEMA) on a non-reimbursable detail. We urge this committee to insist that these positions and funding should be immediately transferred to FEMA for intergovernmental.

Another of our areas of concern focuses on the Office of Operations Coordination – which was created after the Post Katrina Reform Act, was signed into law--and whether the role this office will perform is consistent with the implementation of the Post Katrina Reform Act. Subtitle C of the Post Katrina Reform Act clearly assigned the FEMA Administrator responsibility for the National Preparedness System, including the National Planning Scenarios and the planning system yet these functions appear to have been placed under the authority of the Office of Operations Coordination. Yet another area of potential concern is a growing internal discussion within DHS regarding the perceived differences between Incident Management and Emergency Management. We believe we can help put the discussion of these terms to rest. Emergency Management is the broader, overarching and systematic approach to the issue of dealing with all disasters and emergencies, whether natural, technological, or homeland security. Incident management, while important, is a much more narrowly focused sub-element of response, one of the four phases of emergency management (mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery). To insist otherwise is to ignore the evidence of reality – and, a tacit acknowledgement on the part of DHS that they fail to understand the broader implications of the overall emergency management system.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we hope that the new administration will consider the critical elements IAEM has adopted. We believe a strong and independent FEMA with clear authority, direct access to the White House, and highly qualified leadership is essential. We urge Congress to insist on full implementation of the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA). We urge continued involvement of state and local emergency managers in policy discussions. We do not want any crash landings. We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

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*Principles of Emergency  
Management*

September 11, 2007

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## Foreword

In March 2007, Dr. Wayne Blanchard of FEMA's Emergency Management Higher Education Project, at the direction of Dr. Cortez Lawrence, Superintendent of FEMA's Emergency Management Institute, convened a working group of emergency management practitioners and academics to consider principles of emergency management. This project was prompted by the realization that while numerous books, articles and papers referred to "principles of emergency management," nowhere in the vast array of literature on the subject was there an agreed-upon definition of what these principles were.

The group agreed on eight principles that will be used to guide the development of a doctrine of emergency management. This monograph lists these eight principles and provides a brief description of each.

IAEM was well represented in the working group, and the IAEM Board endorsed these principles upon their publication.

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### DEFINITION, VISION, MISSION, PRINCIPLES

#### ***Definition***

Emergency management is the managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters.

#### ***Vision***

Emergency management seeks to promote safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters.

#### ***Mission***

Emergency management protects communities by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

#### ***Principles***

Emergency management must be:

1. **Comprehensive** – emergency managers consider and take into account all hazards, all phases, all stakeholders and all impacts relevant to disasters.
2. **Progressive** – emergency managers anticipate future disasters and take preventive and preparatory measures to build disaster-resistant and disaster-resilient communities.
3. **Risk-driven** – emergency managers use sound risk management principles (hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in assigning priorities and resources.
4. **Integrated** – emergency managers ensure unity of effort among all levels of government and all elements of a community.
5. **Collaborative** – emergency managers create and sustain broad and sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust, advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication.
6. **Coordinated** – emergency managers synchronize the activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose.
7. **Flexible** – emergency managers use creative and innovative approaches in solving disaster challenges.
8. **Professional** – emergency managers value a science and knowledge-based approach based on education, training, experience, ethical practice, public stewardship and continuous improvement.

## PRINCIPLES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### 1. *Comprehensive*

*Emergency managers consider and take into account all hazards, all phases, all impacts, and all stakeholders relevant to disasters.*

Comprehensive emergency management can be defined as the preparation for and the carrying out of all emergency functions necessary to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters caused by all hazards, whether natural, technological, or human caused. Comprehensive emergency management consists of four related components: all hazards, all phases, all impacts, and all stakeholders.

**All Hazards:** All hazards within a jurisdiction must be considered as part of a thorough risk assessment and prioritized on the basis of impact and likelihood of occurrence. Treating all hazards the same in terms of planning resource allocation ultimately leads to failure. There are similarities in how one reacts to all disasters. These event-specific actions form the basis for most emergency plans. However, there are also distinct differences between disaster agents that must be addressed in agent or hazard-specific plans and these can only be identified through the risk assessment process.

**All Phases:** The Comprehensive Emergency Management Model<sup>1</sup> on which modern emergency management is based defines four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. *Mitigation* consists of those activities designed to prevent or re-

duce losses from disaster. It is usually considered the initial phase of emergency management, although it may be a component of other phases. *Preparedness* is focused on the development of plans and capabilities for effective disaster response. *Response* is the immediate reaction to a disaster. It may occur as the disaster is anticipated, as well as soon after it begins. *Recovery* consists of those activities that continue beyond the emergency period to restore critical community functions and manage reconstruction.<sup>2</sup> Detailed planning and execution is required for each phase. Further, phases often overlap as there is often no clearly defined boundary where one phase ends and another begins. Successful emergency management coordinates activities in all four phases.

**All Impacts:** Emergencies and disasters cut across a broad spectrum in terms of impact on infrastructure, human services, and the economy. Just as all hazards need to be considered in developing plans and protocols, all impacts or predictable consequences relating to those hazards must also be analyzed and addressed.

**All Stakeholders:** This component is closely related to the emergency management principles of coordination and collaboration. Effective emergency management requires close working relationships among all levels of government, the private sector, and the general public.

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<sup>1</sup> National Governors' Association. *1978 Emergency Preparedness Project: Final Report*. Washington, DC: NGA, 1978.

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<sup>2</sup> William L. Waugh, Jr. *Living with Hazards, Dealing with Disasters: An Introduction to Emergency Management*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2000.

## 2. Progressive

*Emergency managers anticipate future disasters and take preventive and preparatory measures to build disaster-resistant and disaster-resilient communities.*

Research and data from natural and social scientists indicates that disasters are becoming more frequent, intense, dynamic, and complex. The number of federally declared disasters has risen dramatically over recent decades. Monetary losses are rising at exponential rates because more property is being put at risk. The location of communities and the construction of buildings and infrastructure have not considered potential hazards. Environmental mismanagement and a failure to develop and enforce sound building codes are producing more disasters. There is an increased risk of terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction

Emergency management must give greater attention to prevention and mitigation activities. Traditionally, emergency managers have confined their activities to developing emergency response plans and coordinating the initial response to disasters. Given the escalating risks facing communities, however, emergency managers must become more progressive and strategic in their thinking. The role of the emergency manager can no longer be that of a technician but must evolve to that of a manager and senior policy advisor who oversees a community-wide program to address all hazards and all phases of the emergency management cycle.

Emergency managers must understand how to assess hazards and reduce vulnerability, seek the support of public officials, and support the passage of laws and the enforcement of ordinances that reduce vulnerability. Collaborative efforts between experts and organizations in the public, private and

non-profit sectors are needed to promote disaster prevention and preparedness. Efforts such as land-use planning, environmental management, building code enforcement, planning, training, and exercises are required and must emphasize vulnerability reduction and capacity building, not just compliance. Emergency management is progressive and not just reactive in orientation.

## 3. Risk-driven

*Emergency managers use sound risk management principles (hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in assigning priorities and resources.*

Emergency managers are responsible for using available resources effectively and efficiently to manage risk. That means that the setting of policy and programmatic priorities should be based upon measured levels of risk to lives, property, and the environment. NFPA 1600 states that emergency management programs “shall identify hazards, monitor those hazards, the likelihood of their occurrence, and the vulnerability of people, property, the environment, and the entity [program] itself to those hazards.”<sup>3</sup> The Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standard echoes this requirement for public sector emergency management programs.

Effective risk management is based upon (1) the identification of the natural and man-made hazards that may have significant effect on the community or organization; (2) the analysis of those hazards based on the vulnerability of the community to determine the nature of the risks they pose; and (3) an impact analysis to determine the potential effect they may have on specific communities, organizations, and other entities. Mitigation

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<sup>3</sup> *NFPA 1600 Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs, 2007 Edition*, National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA. Section 5.3

strategies, emergency operations plans, continuity of operations plans, and pre- and post-disaster recovery plans should be based upon the specific risks identified and resources should be allocated appropriately to address those risks.

Communities across the United States have very different risks. It is the responsibility of emergency managers to address the risks specific to their communities. Budgets, human resource management decisions, plans, public education programs, training and exercising, and other efforts necessarily should focus on the hazards that pose the greatest risks first. An all-hazards focus ensures that plans are adaptable to a variety of disaster types and that, by addressing the hazards that pose the greatest risk, the community will be better prepared for lesser risks as well.

#### **4. Integrated**

*Emergency managers ensure unity of effort among all levels of government and all elements of a community.*

In the early 1980's, emergency managers adopted the Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS), an all-hazards approach to the direction, control and coordination of disasters regardless of their location, size and complexity. IEMS integrates *partnerships* that include all stakeholders in the community's decision-making processes. IEMS is intended to create an organizational culture that is critical to achieving unity of effort between government, key community partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

Unity of effort is dependent on both vertical and horizontal integration. This means that at the local level, emergency programs must be integrated with other activities of government. For example, department

emergency plans must be synchronized with and support the overall emergency operations plan for the community. In addition, plans at all levels of local government must ultimately be integrated with and support the community's vision and be consistent with its values.

Similarly, private sector continuity plans should take into account the community's emergency operations plan. Businesses are demanding greater interface with government to understand how to react to events that threaten business survival. Additionally, businesses can provide significant resources during disasters and thus may be a critical component of the community's emergency operations plan. In addition, given the high percentage of critical infrastructure owned by the private sector, failure to include businesses in emergency programs could have grave consequences for the community.

The local emergency management program must also be synchronized with higher-level plans and programs. This is most noticeable in the dependence of local government on county, state and federal resources during a disaster. If plans have not been synchronized and integrated, resources may be delayed.

Emergency management must be integrated into daily decisions, not just during times of disasters. While protecting the population is a primary responsibility of government, it cannot be accomplished without building partnerships among disciplines and across all sectors, including the private sector and the media.

#### **5. Collaborative**

*Emergency managers create and sustain broad and sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust,*

*advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication.*

There is a difference between the terms “collaboration” and “coordination,” and current usage often makes it difficult to distinguish between these words. Coordination refers to a process designed to ensure that functions, roles and responsibilities are identified and tasks accomplished; collaboration must be viewed as an attitude or an organizational culture that characterizes the degree of unity and cooperation that exists within a community. In essence, collaboration creates the environment in which coordination can function effectively.

In disaster situations, the one factor that is consistently credited with improving the performance of a community is the degree to which there is an open and cooperative relationship among those individuals and agencies involved. Shortly after Hurricane Katrina, *Governing* magazine correspondent, Jonathan Walters wrote: “Most important to the strength of the intergovernmental chain are solid relationships among those who might be called upon to work together in times of high stress. ‘You don’t want to meet someone for the first time while you’re standing around in the rubble,’ says Jarrod Bernstein, a spokesman for the New York Office of Emergency Management.”<sup>4</sup> It is this kind of culture and relationship that collaboration is intended to establish.

A commitment to collaboration makes other essential roles and functions possible. Comfort and Cahill acknowledge the essential nature of collaboration within the emergency management function: “In environments of high uncertainty, this quality of inter-personal trust is essential for collective action. Building that trust in a multi-organizational operating environment is a

complex process, perhaps the most difficult task involved in creating an integrated emergency management system.”<sup>5</sup> Thomas Drabek<sup>6</sup> suggests that collaboration involves three elements:

1. We must commit to ensuring that we have done everything possible to identify all potential players in a disaster event and work to involve them in every aspect of planning and preparedness for a disaster event.
2. Having achieved this broad involvement, we must constantly work to maintain and sustain the real, human contact necessary to make the system work in a disaster event.
3. Finally, our involvement of all of our “partners” must be based on a sincere desire to listen to and incorporate their concerns and ideas into our planning and preparedness efforts. This element is probably the most critical because it is this sincere interest that engenders trust, cooperation and understanding and allows us to truly have a “team” approach to protecting our communities in times of disaster.

This principle can perhaps best be encapsulated by remembering: “If we shake hands before a disaster, we won’t have to point fingers afterwards.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Louise K. Comfort and Anthony G. Cahill. *Managing Disaster, Strategies and Policy Perspectives*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas E. Drabek. *Strategies for Coordinating Disaster Responses*. Boulder, CO: Program on Environment and Behavior, Monograph 61, University of Colorado, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Michael D. Selves. Oral testimony before the United States House Subcommittee on Emergency Management of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, April 26, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Walters. GOVEXEC.com, December 1, 2005.

## **6. Coordinated**

*Emergency managers synchronize the activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose.*

Emergency managers are seldom in a position to direct the activities of the many agencies and organizations involved in the emergency management program. In most cases, the people in charge of these organizations are senior to the emergency manager, have direct line authority from the senior official, or are autonomous. Each stakeholder brings to the planning process their own authorities, legal mandates, culture and operating missions. The principle of coordination requires that the emergency manager gain agreement among these disparate agencies as to a common purpose and then ensure that their independent activities help to achieve this common purpose.

In essence, the principle of coordination requires that the emergency manager think strategically, that he or she see the “big picture” and how each stakeholder fits into that mosaic. This type of thinking is the basis for the strategic program plan required under the National Preparedness Standard (NFPA 1600) and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program. In developing the strategic plan, the emergency manager facilitates the identification of agreed-upon goals and then persuades stakeholders to accept responsibility for specific performance objectives. The strategic plan then becomes a mechanism for assessing program progress and accomplishments.

This same process can be used on a smaller scale to develop a specific plan, such as a community recovery plan; it is also an inherent component of tactical and operational response. The principle of coordination is applicable to all four phases of the comprehensive emergency management cycle

and is essential for successful planning and operational activities related to the emergency management program. Application of the principle of coordination provides the emergency manager with the management tools that produce the results necessary to achieve a common purpose.

## **7. Flexible**

*Emergency managers use creative and innovative approaches in solving disaster challenges.*

Due to their diverse and varied responsibilities, emergency managers constitute one of the most flexible organizational elements of government. Laws, policies and operating procedures that allow little flexibility in the performance of duties drive more traditional branches of government. Emergency managers are instead encouraged to develop creative solutions to solve problems and achieve goals.

A principal role of the emergency manager is the assessment of vulnerability and risk and the development of corresponding strategies that could be used to reduce or eliminate risk. However, there can more than one potential mitigation strategy for any given risk. The emergency manager must have the flexibility to choose not only the most efficient course of action but the one that would have the most chance of being implemented.

In the preparedness phase, the emergency manager uses many resources to create and maintain a well-organized community response structure. One such resource is the development of a risk-based community emergency operations plan. While most policies and procedures in government are specific and designed to offer little room for interpretation, the emergency operations plan is designed to be flexible and applicable to all

community emergency operations. It is based on the consequences of the event, not the promulgating action.

The most dramatic phase of emergency management is response. In this phase the emergency manager coordinates activities to ensure overall objectives are being met. The emergency manager must be flexible enough to suggest variations in tactics or procedures and adapt quickly to a rapidly changing and frequently unclear situation. The emphasis is on creative problem solving based on the event and not on rigid adherence to pre-existing plans.

As part of the community team that will determine recovery priorities the emergency manager must be capable of dealing with the political, economic and social pressures in making these decisions. It is natural to focus on short-term efforts in disaster recovery. However, the emergency manager cannot lose sight of the long-term needs of the community, and it is this aspect of recovery that often must be driven by the emergency manager.

Flexibility is a key trait of emergency management, and success in the emergency management field is dependent upon it. Being able to provide alternate solutions to stakeholders and then having the flexibility to implement these solutions is a formula for success in emergency management.

### **8. Professional**

*Emergency managers value a science and knowledge-based approach based on education, training, experience, ethical practice, public stewardship and continuous improvement.*

Professionalism in the context of the principles of emergency management pertains not to the personal attributes of the emer-

gency manager but to a commitment to emergency management as a profession. A profession, as opposed to a discipline or a vocation, has certain characteristics, among which are:

**Code of ethics** – while no single code of ethics has yet been agreed upon for the profession, the Code of Ethics of the International Association of Emergency Managers, with its emphasis on respect, commitment and professionalism, is generally accepted as the standard for emergency managers.

**Professional associations** – emergency managers seeking to advance the profession of emergency management are members of professional organizations such as the National Emergency Manager's Association (NEMA) and the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). They also participate in appropriate state, local and professional associations.

**Board certification** – emergency managers seek to earn professional certification through such programs as the Certified Emergency Manager® program of IAEM. Professional certification demonstrates the achievement of a minimum level of expertise and encourages continued professional development through periodic recertification.

**Specialised body of knowledge** – the knowledge base for emergency managers consists of three principal areas. The first is the study of historical disasters, particularly as it pertains to the community for which the emergency manager is responsible. Secondly, the emergency manager must have a working familiarity with social science literature pertaining to disaster issues. Third, the emergency manager must be well versed in emergency management practices, standards and guidelines.

**Standards and best practices** – the principal standards used in emergency management are NFPA 1600 and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards. These two standards provide the overarching context for the use of other standards and best practices.