

# The City Emergency Services Coordinator

This is an excerpt from the *Emergency Manager's Handbook*, prepared by SEMS Group LA.

## Introduction

Your job as the emergency services coordinator is a vital one to the community, as it is your role to ensure your city is capable of responding to a wide variety of natural, man-made and technological disasters. In this role, you are responsible for coordinating the plans and operational readiness of the various components of the emergency management system in your jurisdiction—fire, police, emergency medical services, public works, parks and recreation, volunteers and other groups contributing to the management of emergencies.

When you begin, you may feel you are looking at the many pieces of a giant puzzle without knowing what the picture is supposed to look like. You may think some of the parts fit together so loosely they may not belong at all. You have probably discovered you are a general without troops—you have been tasked with developing the emergency plans for the community, but you know that the fire chief has the personnel and equipment, the American Red Cross handles mass care and shelter, the public works director has the trucks, the hospital has the medical staff and the police chief has the law enforcement duties. All of these emergency responders come into play in an emergency, but where do you stand in relation to them?

Similarly, where do the next higher levels of government come in and what is your relationship with them? What can you expect from the county, state and federal governments? But your biggest question is probably about your own job. What is an emergency services coordinator and what are you supposed to do?

## Your Responsibility

Your job as the emergency services coordinator is to make certain that the various components of the emergency management organization in your city know the threats to the community, prepare and plan for emergencies, can operate effectively in an emergency and can conduct recovery operations after a disaster. You are responsible for coordinating all the necessary activities before, during and after an emergency to ensure effective operation of the emergency management system.

You will accomplish your job by performing several specific tasks that will be discussed in this guideline. But before you do, you need to realize that emergency management in your jurisdiction will reflect the way you, your elected officials and city administrative staff decide to approach the job. A crucial part of your job is educating the city staff and officials as to the need for effective emergency management and the legal and financial ramifications if the need is not met.

## Legal Responsibility

As a public employee, by law you become a disaster service worker during an emergency. This law has a moral basis in that every employee of a city, county, state or federal agency must do everything possible to protect and preserve the safety of the citizens in the jurisdiction. Beyond that, your city has a local ordinance detailing who has the final authority for emergency management decisions. In that ordinance, you will probably find your city has established a disaster council, a line of authority, as well as ordinances dealing with curfews and perhaps even an ordinance pertaining to debris removal following a disaster. Get copies of those ordinances and become familiar with them, as they will guide your actions. You will need them as you fill your role as an advisor to the city manager.

## **Working With the City Manager and Other Officials**

Your local emergency management ordinance, as well as the city's emergency operations plan, will specify a chain of command in emergencies. It will tell you to whom you report. In most cases, it will be the city manager who is ultimately responsible for emergency management decisions, but it could also be a police or fire chief, perhaps even the mayor. One of the first things you should do is to find your place in the chain of command and determine what your supervisor expects of you and your job.

From one city to another, local government leaders have different expectations of what the emergency services coordinator should do on a daily basis. One city manager or supervisor may closely supervise your activities, while another may be supportive of your efforts without directing your daily activities. Either way, your job is the same; the only difference is in how you interact with your supervisor. Also, while you may report directly to the city manager during a disaster, your day-to-day supervisor may be a different person. During a disaster, keep your regular supervisor aware at all times of your disaster-related activities and duties.

As you deal with the city manager or other officials you may be reporting to, remember that you are the one who is trained and responsible for emergency management. You should suggest options, alternatives and directions, and assist your superiors in making decisions.

How you work with your supervisor is a part of your job you will have to clarify in the first weeks and months of your job. The emergency services coordinator should be reporting directly to the city manager during an emergency; and by that person's authority, coordinate all the functions of government emergency response. To achieve this, a good working relationship is necessary, with trust an essential element. This guide cannot tell you how to gain the trust of your supervisor except to say that competence and hard work create an atmosphere conducive to forming good working relationships.

## **Coordination with Other Agencies**

You should strive to be looked upon as the city's lead person in emergency management and as the advisor to the city manager regarding disaster related concerns and issues. It is important that all departments and agencies look upon your role in that manner. As the emergency services coordinator, you will be working closely with many departments; and during an actual disaster, you will be coordinating departmental functions. A good working relationship with all department heads is essential.

Coordination of departmental functions is one you will have to deal with early in your job. Police, fire and other departments and agencies are independent of each other on a day-to-day basis. They have their own mandates and their own responsibilities to fulfill. In an emergency, however, all emergency responders must work together. The public safety is poorly served by competitiveness and organizational jealousy.

Frequent contact, sharing advice and combined training are all ways to make coordination easier. Most important of all, however, is to know the boundaries of coordination.

For example, coordination means making certain that police and public works are cooperating in setting up a security or crowd control line. Your role as coordinator is to make certain that the responsibility for that activity has been assigned and is being carried out without conflict or controversy. Your role is definitely not to tell the police chief how or where to set up security or to tell public works how many barricades to use.

Your role as coordinator may come into play in minor emergencies and can act as a good training tool. Even in a fire, you may be called upon to coordinate the temporary housing of victims with the American

Red Cross or other social service agency. Your job is one of planning and coordinating the performance of those community services which may be needed.

As the new emergency services coordinator, your city manager or supervisor can help establish a good working relationship with department heads by putting out an official directive about your position and introducing you at administrative staff and city council meetings. A press release in the local newspaper or releases in various community newsletters are a good way to introduce you to the community at large. A personal letter from you to schools, service organizations and select businesses will reinforce the message you are now working on behalf of the entire community. Attendance at meetings of the chamber of commerce and similar organizations will soon integrate you into the community.

One of the basic and most common problems which emergency management personnel face is a lack of city and community support. This is particularly true in communities with little or no history of major emergencies or disasters. Emergency management is often viewed as something only needed during an actual disaster, and program support may be minimal at best. Don't get discouraged! Even if you feel support for your program is not adequate, you have the opportunity to try to build additional support by incorporating city staff, citizens, businesses, schools and volunteer agencies into your efforts at every possible occasion. Literature handouts at community events, having April proclaimed as earthquake preparedness month or talking to senior citizens about winter storm safety will keep you and your program visible while generating interest in emergency management. The bottom line is— you are the key to your community's support!

### **Local Partnerships/Special Districts**

Emergency management is a group effort of all government departments and agencies in your jurisdiction. You are partners with all of them, serving the interests of public safety in a disaster. Local elected officials are also partners in emergency management, although you will probably be working with them in primarily an advisory capacity. You also have a wide variety of partners in the private sector. They range from private business to civic organizations and individuals. Your partnership with the local news media also cannot be overemphasized. A good working relationship with the press will be one of your most important resources.

Under SEMS, special districts also have an important role to play, and they also must use SEMS in order to be eligible for disaster personnel cost reimbursements. Special districts include school districts, mosquito abatement districts, water districts, etc. Because of their highly diversified nature, special districts are a valuable resource to your community and your emergency management program. Talk to the special districts in your jurisdiction and find out what types of emergency situations they face, how they respond, what they may need from you and what assistance they may be able to provide to you.

### **Working With County, State and Federal Agencies**

One of the basic premises of emergency management is the partnership that exists among the federal, state, county and local governments. Each governmental body has certain duties and responsibilities to augment and support the other levels of government; and in any major emergency or disaster, they all work together. Your jurisdiction should never be left to fend for itself in a disaster, as there is always help available when the situation goes beyond the resources of your community. When in need, the first rule is to turn to the next higher level of government.

Under SEMS, each county (composed of the county, its cities and special districts), becomes an Operational Area (OA), responsible for coordinating both information and resources within its geographical boundaries during a disaster. This process begins at the local level, when each city within the OA reports its operational and resource status to the Op Area. In the Los Angeles County OA, the

preferred method of communication is via the Emergency Management Information System (EMIS—Internet) (see Tab 4). If EMIS is not available, then information or resource reports should be provided to your contact/contract Sheriff's Station by means coordinated with and agreed to by the watch commander and city staff. The Sheriff's Station will then be responsible for entering the data into EMIS. This information is collected, analyzed and relayed by the OA to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), Southern Region. The OA acts as the point of contact and coordinator for assistance from the OES regional offices. In Southern California, the regional office of the OES is located in Los Alamitos.

Should a regional disaster occur and resources from other outside regions be needed, the regional OES office will coordinate with state OES headquarters for assistance at the state level. This means the full range of agencies and departments of the state of California become available for use by the impacted jurisdictions. Should state resources prove insufficient to handle the situation; the state of California can request aid from the federal government through the agency created to oversee disaster assistance, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

As with the state, almost all federal agencies have programs which provide help to local jurisdictions during one or more of the phases of emergency management, whether it is in training personnel or providing hazard mitigation funds.

## **Hazard Mitigation**

It would be ideal if your community could prepare for all types of hazards. However, in most cases it is not practical to be prepared for all types of hazards, as some may never occur in your community. So, to begin planning a program to manage emergencies you must identify those hazards which, if they occur, could harm your community.

First you must decide which hazards have the potential of affecting your jurisdiction. This is hazard identification. Second, you must identify how people, property and structures will be damaged by the disastrous event. That is a vulnerability analysis. A good way to judge what may happen in the future is to look at your community's history of disaster and major emergencies. Review what types of emergencies your community has faced over the years and if conditions still exist which could again impact the jurisdiction.

In hazard identification, you must be knowledgeable about potential future hazards—those that may be brought into the community (such as the building of a fixed site hazardous materials facility) and those that now exist but have not been recognized as hazards (like a now-closed manufacturing plant that might have left behind toxic waste).

For vulnerability analysis, you need to review each hazard you have identified and determine who or what will be affected and how badly. In other words, what is the potential for death and injury to people; what would be the economic loss to individuals, businesses or local government caused by that hazard?

So, one of your more important jobs is to keep your eyes open to all that is happening in the community that could become a hazard and result in an emergency situation. It is your responsibility to monitor how departments are carrying out their jobs as they affect the safety of the community. Your role is also to motivate mitigation activities through hazard awareness, coordinate agencies that have the legal or formal responsibility for mitigation and ensure continuing enforcement of hazard reduction measures. Why you? The emergency services coordinator views the whole picture of public safety, not just by department or agency, and is the person with the broad scope of responsibility to assure that the community does not do anything to increase the chances of an emergency.

## **Preparedness**

Emergency preparedness is being ready to react promptly and effectively in the event of a major emergency or disaster. Being prepared means you have a plan of action. The various agencies in your jurisdiction know what to do before the emergency occurs. In some cases, such as a flood or severe weather, you may have an early warning which will give you time to get ready for the event. However, often you will have no prior warning, such as with earthquakes, explosions or hazardous material releases. You must be prepared to respond immediately, and to do so you must have a plan—a plan you must be reasonably certain will work. You must know what resources are available to you and how to utilize them. It is also very important that your actions are consistent with local, state and federal laws which govern what you can do. You must act within these laws so that you are legally carrying out your duties and are not subject to criminal or civil lawsuits because you acted beyond your authority.

## **Planning**

Using SEMS, the state of California has directed that each jurisdiction use the basic elements of SEMS when responding to a disaster. SEMS includes the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) as a management structure, the use of operational areas (OA) for coordinating efforts in each county, ensuring that a multi-agency coordination system (MACS) is used when outside agencies are providing assistance, using mutual aid systems to request and/or provide aid and the use of computerized information systems which connect the operational area with other levels of government.

Both the state of California and FEMA have provided guidelines for local emergency operations planning. In Los Angeles County, SEMS Group LA has developed a detailed Multi Hazard Functional Plan. This plan provides everything a local coordinator needs to develop a comprehensive emergency management strategy for their community.

The Multi Hazard Functional Plan is composed of three segments: 1) the basic plan, 2) EOC operations and 3) supporting documents.

Part 1 is the basic plan and is the umbrella document that draws together all other parts of the plan. Generally, it defines the purpose of the plan, the types of disasters or emergencies which may occur in the jurisdiction, how the jurisdiction will be organized to carry out the plan, the roles and relationships of various government agencies and the laws which provide the basis for the emergency plan.

Part 2 provides for EOC operations and the various functions and responsibilities assigned during a disaster. Using the Incident Command System (ICS) organizational structure, management, operations, planning/ intelligence, logistics and finance/ administration sections or functions are established to define clearly the relationships of various individuals and departments or agencies to specified tasks.

Part 3 contains a wealth of supporting documentation including everything from public information resources to cost recovery documentation. This section will provide the basis for developing many additional programs in a community and is a valuable tool not to be overlooked.

One of your first tasks as a coordinator is to familiarize yourself with the city's emergency plan. If your jurisdiction has recently revised its emergency operations plan, you may only need to make yearly revisions to reflect new policies or procedures. If the city's emergency plan is not currently updated, you may need to revise completely the plan and its supporting documents. Contact your disaster management area coordinator for assistance in determining the viability of your city's plan.

Remember that a good plan is written as part of a team effort. Make sure that each agency or department in your jurisdiction has been included in the plan's development or revision process. Don't

expect agreement from everyone on every point; but you, as the emergency services coordinator, are responsible for recommending a final form of the plan to your city council for adoption.

## **Exercising the Plan**

You have now either rewritten or revised the jurisdiction's emergency plan and supporting procedures, but will it work? Until you test it, you really don't know for sure that it will. The most effective way to test the plan and its components is by simulating a real emergency to exercise both the personnel and the procedures. There are four types of exercises, each progressively more realistic and complex.

### ***Orientation***

An informal and low-key exercise; it is largely designed to familiarize personnel with the plan, departmental or agency functions and individual responsibilities within that plan.

### ***Table Top***

This type of exercise has participants responding to messages in an event and familiarizes participants with responsibilities and procedures as well as coordination among jurisdictions, departments and agencies.

### ***Functional***

A functional exercise takes place in the EOC or DOC and involves a complex simulation of a realistic situation. This method tests the organization of the plan, its task assignments and the coordination necessary to make authoritative decisions.

### ***Full Scale***

This combines a functional exercise with a drill in which field personnel of one or more emergency services actually operate. This includes actual movement of personnel and equipment in the field as well as EOC activation.

A few tips:

- Just as the development of the plan was a team effort, make your exercise development a team effort.
- Do not go on to more advanced an exercise until everyone has participated in the more basic exercise and is moderately comfortable with his or her level of skill.
- Get support from all levels for conducting an exercise, from the city manager to the support staff.
- Always strive to have a "winning" exercise where participants walk away feeling they did a good job but have room for improvement. The quickest way to lose support of the program is to have a "losing" exercise where everyone is overwhelmed and walks away feeling inadequate to the task.

## **Training**

In California, we are fortunate to have a training branch of the Office of Emergency Services. This is called CSTI or the California Specialized Training Institute. It offers many classes in emergency and disaster management ranging from the SEMS Introductory course to exercise development. The CSTI campus is located in San Luis Obispo but offers a wide range of classes throughout the state of California. Jurisdictions interested in hosting a particular class can contact CSTI for information on being a host city. CSTI can even assist your jurisdiction in conducting a functional or full scale exercise. Call CSTI for class fees and schedules.

In Los Angeles County, training is also available from a variety of sources. Disaster management area coordinators can assist their constituent jurisdictions in SEMS training and groups such as the county's Emergency Preparedness Commission (EPC) offer training and seminars on a regular basis.

Just as city personnel are required to train, remember that special districts and businesses must also train their personnel in emergency response. You might wish to set up a mailing or notification list of schools and other special districts and interested businesses to contact when training opportunities arise that might benefit them as well as your jurisdiction. It is a courtesy which could prove to be a valuable asset in the future.

## **Resources**

One of the first things you will learn, as a coordinator is that to do the job requires resources. Resources are both people and equipment. For example, you may need to evacuate 100 people from a hazardous materials release. It is not enough to identify the need for buses; you must also recognize your need for qualified drivers. The point is, to carry out your plans; you must know what you have to work with.

Resources come from five areas: those within your government's jurisdiction, those from neighboring jurisdictions, those from the private sector, those from volunteer agencies and those from higher levels of government.

In order to access emergency resources, you must know what, where and how to get what you need. Developing a resource inventory will provide the essential information that will enable you to best use resources in an emergency. If your jurisdiction already has a community resource inventory, get it out and review it. This inventory should be updated as often as necessary, but at a minimum of once a year. If you don't have one, develop one by taking the following steps:

1. Find out what you have in the city—each department or agency should be able to supply you with an inventory list of equipment, supplies and personnel (including certifications).
2. Review mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions. Ask your city's departments if they are familiar with capabilities of other cities. If you don't have formal agreements, meet with other cities' representatives to discuss how to access each other resources.
3. Approach the private sector to find out what they have available to supplement your existing resources. Develop a partnership program to bring them into the preparedness planning for your city.
4. Determine the capabilities and limitation of your volunteer agencies.
5. Develop and maintain contact with county and regional personnel. It's better to have a good working relationship with other levels of government, fully aware of what they can and cannot provide, before a disaster rather than during a disaster.

It is very important to explore all the possible uses of the resources belonging to your jurisdiction before you turn to the private sector or a neighboring jurisdiction. Although comprehensive emergency management is built on the partnership among governments and the private sector, the first responsibility you have is for a strong program within your own jurisdiction.

## **Public Education**

Another hat you will be required to wear is that of an educator. Even as you prepare and train city personnel for their role and responsibility before, during and after an emergency, you must also prepare the community at large. Residents, businesses and schools will all be looking to you for guidance and assistance in preparing themselves.

There are a number of excellent preparedness programs which can be used for educating the community on a variety of disaster topics. Programs like the Earthquake Survival Program (ESP) by Los Angeles County can be used to educate the numerous segments of your community on the steps to take in becoming self reliant. Partnerships between FEMA and the American Red Cross have resulted in literature covering a wide range of topics. An excellent resource is "Talking about Disaster: Guide for Standard Messages". This and other brochures are available through FEMA or your local chapter of the American Red Cross and many are available for download on the FEMA or ARC websites. FEMA will also make camera-ready originals available for customized brochures. California's Office of Emergency Services also produces excellent literature that is available from their regional administrative offices and the OES website. Videos and literature from private sources are also now becoming available and are often available in multiple languages.

So, where do you start? Some suggestions from local coordinators include:

1. sending a letter at the beginning of the school year to all the schools in your jurisdiction introducing yourself and explaining the services available to them;
2. have an article in each issue of the chamber of commerce newsletter dealing with different topics of disaster preparedness;
3. send letters to the community's service organizations letting them know you are available for presentations to their clubs;
4. have a booth for literature handouts at high-visibility events in your community;
5. work with your local cable TV service provider in having EBS drills followed with your name and telephone number;
6. have a local radio station feature a segment on disaster preparedness;
7. make presentations to Neighborhood Watch groups;
8. meet with PTA groups; and
9. prepare a list of special interest groups (senior citizens, mobile home parks, etc.) and meet with them to discuss their needs and concerns.

These are but a few of the many ways to reach the community with the message that you are ready and willing to assist them in their preparedness efforts.

## **Response**

The true test of any emergency management program is how the community actually responds in time of emergency. From the time of the first notification or warning of an emergency, dealing with immediate public safety issues, conducting safety and damage assessments, caring for people after the emergency and dealing with long-term recovery issues, the emergency services coordinator will be focusing on the effectiveness of the jurisdiction's emergency operations center (EOC).

Having a designated EOC is a must. Trying to run emergency operations without an EOC is like trying to drive a car without a steering wheel. Your EOC actually serves two purposes. First, it serves as a center to direct and control agencies and departments tasked with responding to the emergency either in a direct or supporting role. Second, it is a centralized location for collection and dissemination of information regarding the emergency. To you, this means having a facility large enough to accommodate those individuals and representatives that have functional responsibilities in the EOC, providing adequate communications for the EOC responders and providing for their physical requirements.

Some of the first questions you need to ask regarding your jurisdiction's EOC are:

1. Where is it?
2. Is there an alternate in case the primary EOC is unusable?
3. How long does it take to become operational?



4. Does it have a back-up power system and adequate fuel supply?
5. Does it have adequate space for operations?
6. Does it have adequate communications?
7. Who is designated to work in the EOC?
8. Who is authorized to activate the EOC?
9. Have EOC personnel received training in EOC procedures?
10. When was the last time the city evaluated the operational effectiveness of the EOC?

As the person tasked with ensuring and maintaining the operational readiness of the EOC, you might wish to take a class in EOC design and function which is offered by CSTI. You may find a cramped EOC is hampering your effectiveness. By rethinking the physical layout of the facility and reevaluating the functions performed there, you may find new and better methods of conducting operations.

You may also wish to visit other EOCs. Coordinators are always willing to help each other in their preparedness efforts, and sharing what works and what doesn't can certainly give you options you may not have considered. Your disaster management area coordinator can also help you in assessing your EOC. Besides the physical layout, careful consideration must be given to communications systems, informational displays, computer capabilities and staffing issues.

### **Safety/Damage Assessment**

Collection of information regarding the nature and extent of damage in your community is a major function of the EOC. In Los Angeles County, cities are requested to relay the operational status of the city within thirty (30) minutes of a disaster to the OA: 1) via EMIS (after initial notification to contact/contract Sheriff's Station); or 2) if EMIS is not available, then notification to your contact/ contract Sheriff's Station by means coordinated with and agreed to by the watch commander and city staff. The Sheriff's Station will then be responsible for entering the data into EMIS. As declarations of disaster and requests for state and federal assistance are tied directly to the amount of dollar damage, rapid assessment of the jurisdiction is a priority. It is also a key step in caring for the long- term needs of the people in your community.

Your role in the collection of information is to have in place trained field observers, a procedure whereby they report the information to the EOC, and once in the EOC, a procedure for collecting, analyzing and reporting the information to the appropriate EOC personnel and outside agencies. Action plans, both for field and EOC personnel, will ultimately be developed from the information collected. Procedures for documenting field work and EOC actions, based on that information, should also be developed as part of the planning process.

### **Public Information**

In addition to providing a location for direction and control, the EOC acts as the primary point for public information. The public must be kept well informed during an emergency, or the response of citizens may be unpredictable. The local news media will probably be your focal point for disseminating information that affects large segments of your population. The information the news media needs is who, what, when, where, why and what next. Prepared press releases are good ways to cover essential facts, but reporters will probably want briefings with local officials.

A good public information program during emergencies will also assist you with rumor control. Rumors are sometimes as dangerous as the emergency itself. The quickest way to control rumors is to get the true facts and make those facts public. A public awareness program also serves to strengthen the alliances between the emergency management program personnel and the local media. The emergency services coordinator should establish a public information officer (PIO) team, if the jurisdiction does not

have one, and assist in providing training for those personnel. CSTI offers excellent courses in media relations and PIO training.

Consider local media as a resource and maintain an up-to-date list of local TV and radio stations, as well as local newspapers, newsletters and publications in your city.

## **Recovery**

There is no clear-cut distinction as to where response ends and recovery begins. For example, if a public works crew is dispatched to board up a building, this is part of the response effort. If in the process they make emergency repairs to the building, this is part of the recovery effort. Since few communities could expect to recover from a major disaster without assistance from the state or federal government, you should be prepared to request aid, and more importantly, is prepared to receive it.

The most common reason financial assistance is withheld is lack of adequate documentation. Documentation simply means providing evidence or proof of what happened and what you did. Photographs and videos of damage are essential. Keep careful records of expenditures of time and labor, and materials and equipment used. Federal and state agencies will require an audit trail from the time your personnel arrive, to the canceled check, to the vendor for supplies you used and proof the work was completed.

State and federal aid result from a request for public assistance. Your role in the process begins by completing a request for public assistance, a new three-part form to file for disaster relief funding. This request can be submitted anytime within the first 30 days after a declaration. You will also attend an applicant's briefing (also within 30 days of declaration date) which gives you an overview of the public assistance program requirements. Typically, emergency services coordinators will file the request for Public Assistance on behalf of their city. Shortly after, you will participate in an applicant kickoff meeting, which is a one-on-one meeting with FEMA/OES/city and is conducted by the public assistance coordinator (FEMA). You will need to prepare a summary of your expenditures (called an Exhibit B). At this point, you will probably want your finance department to take over, as the process gets "audit oriented" from this stage on. After the Exhibit B is filed, the project formulation process begins and project worksheets (PW) will be written. Based on these reports, your city will be allocated money for expenditures and/or repairs associated with the disaster.

As the coordinator, it is important you have procedures in place to track and document the work associated with the PW(s). You need to work closely with your finance department to develop adequate documentation procedures. Part 3 of the SEMS Multi Hazard Functional Plan has a detailed financial recovery documentation plan should your jurisdiction not have one already. Depending on the size of your jurisdiction, you may be expected to handle the entire PW process, up to and including the final inspection and audit. If so, you may wish to take a class in public assistance and financial recovery. Also, request a meeting with state/federal representatives to find out exactly what the process entails. Some cities hire outside consultants in cost recovery, and you may wish to explore this as a possibility if your finance department is not familiar with cost recovery.

## **Financial Planning — Budgets**

Budgets are usually prepared on a yearly basis. Developing an emergency management budget is a straightforward process. How much is your plan going to cost to maintain it in a state of readiness? It can be broken down into two main areas: 1) cost of maintaining the program on a day-to-day (salaries, travel, supplies, equipment) basis; and 2) costs of carrying out the plan (training, capital expenditures, public education). Don't expect to get everything you ask for, especially in the area of new equipment or facilities. You may have trouble getting additional funds over previous appropriations. In most cases, you

will not be able to get any funding for anticipated emergency operations. But whatever you do, don't get discouraged. It may be a slow building process on a yearly basis before you get the funding you feel you need.

Consider exploring special funds for emergency management if general funds are tight. Discuss the options with your supervisor. Take time to explore your city's budget document, usually an excellent source of information about the city organization, the programs available, as well as how funds are distributed.

By making your program a highly visible one, by getting support from the agencies and departments in your jurisdiction and by gathering support of elected officials, your program will eventually get the recognition it deserves.

### **In Closing**

We hope many of your questions regarding your job as emergency services coordinator have been answered. Undoubtedly, you will still have some issues which need to be addressed. One of the unique aspects of emergency management is the willingness of emergency services coordinators to share information and to lend assistance when needed. We have all needed help at some time, whether in developing the city's emergency operations plan, planning an exercise or during an actual disaster. So, don't hesitate to ask for help from your fellow coordinators when you need it—there's always someone there to support your efforts and to lend a hand!