

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Fresh Water Spills – St Louis April 2009



Plan, Exercise Execute and Communicate the Importance of Crisis Communication

Before a disaster strikes

A presentation on a multi-agency environmental exercise and how the exercise knowledge was put to the test during a real incident

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Why Exercise and Why Communicate?

Preparing and practicing before a crisis
Importance of partnerships
Executing a Joint Information System during a disaster
Lessons learned from exercising and the real thing
Importance of working with communities



Exercise Planning

- ◆ We need to be prepared to communicate – it takes practice and exercises to do this right.
- ◆ Yes we play an important part!
- ◆ How to get yourself on the team
- ◆ As an exercise director in public information consider
 - Funding and resources
 - Decision making
 - Expert media and community
 - Public Information Team planning



External Affairs Planning and How We Can Help the Team



♦ Purpose of planning

- Provide external affairs, products, public information training to team members
- Begin planning external affairs programs in support of the exercises (SONS) Real vs. Simulated
- Build relationships among external affairs professionals
- Set objectives our first meeting

External Affairs Program Components



- ◆ Two teams were formed during SONS:
 - Real External Affairs Program
 - Simulated External Affairs Program



Real External Affairs Program



- ◆ **Goals of the Real External Affairs Program:**
 - Show the government is serving the public well
 - Highlight preparedness
 - Provide details on the coordination, cooperation and partnerships among players
 - Provide the public with exercise information
 - Provide the media with a comprehensive program for their participation
 - Prevent public panic

Real EA Program

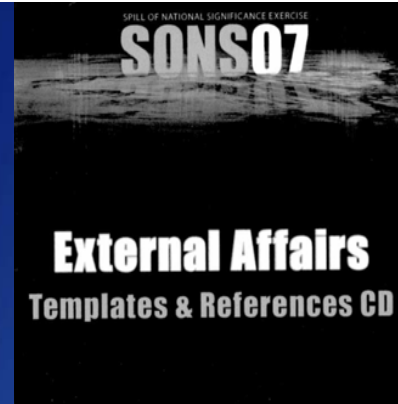


◆ Prior to the exercise:

- Review SONS 07 Web site and provide updates and add a media page to the web site
- Develop comprehensive media contact list (including Spanish outlets) Develop real media program and schedule
- Develop speakers program
- Develop comprehensive list of agency photographers to document the exercise
- Logistics

Exercise Begins

- ◆ In place
 - Communications Strategy
 - PIOs assigned
 - Talking Points/Press Release
 - JICs in place
 - VIP program set up



Simulated External Affairs Program



- ◆ **Simulated External Affairs Program Goals:**
 - Develop a program to support the simulation of media, concerned citizens, stakeholders and politicians during the exercise
 - Develop evaluation criteria to ensure players understand what will be tested and evaluated during the exercise
 - Develop player strategy

Simulated EA Program



- ◆ **Prior to the exercise: What we did**
 - Identified potential players
 - Multi-agency contact info
 - Volunteers
 - Training – Teach ICS and JIC process
 - Developed agency specific press releases
 - Produced Injects



Simulated EA Program Logistic Requirements

- ◆ Room for a JIC at each unified command post
 - Briefing room identified some where inside the command post (preferably near the JIC)
 - Phones, faxes, copiers, wireless internet
 - IT support
 - Office supplies
 - TV with DVD capabilities
 - Video News Network



Legend

- EPA IO Player
- Player JIC
- Real JIC





Challenges and Successes

Challenges

- ◆ Funding always an issue – especially with local and state government
- ◆ Finding qualified PIOs prior to the exercise
- ◆ Finding the time to do the planning and deliverables
- ◆ Government agencies pulled out at the last minute
- ◆ Volunteers – not reliable or committed to the exercise

Successes

- ◆ Spoke with one message – fantastic news stories
- ◆ Training went well
- ◆ Built a team of experts and partnerships
- ◆ Learned we need to practice more
- ◆ 150 PIOs are friends!

Real Situation & Response Team

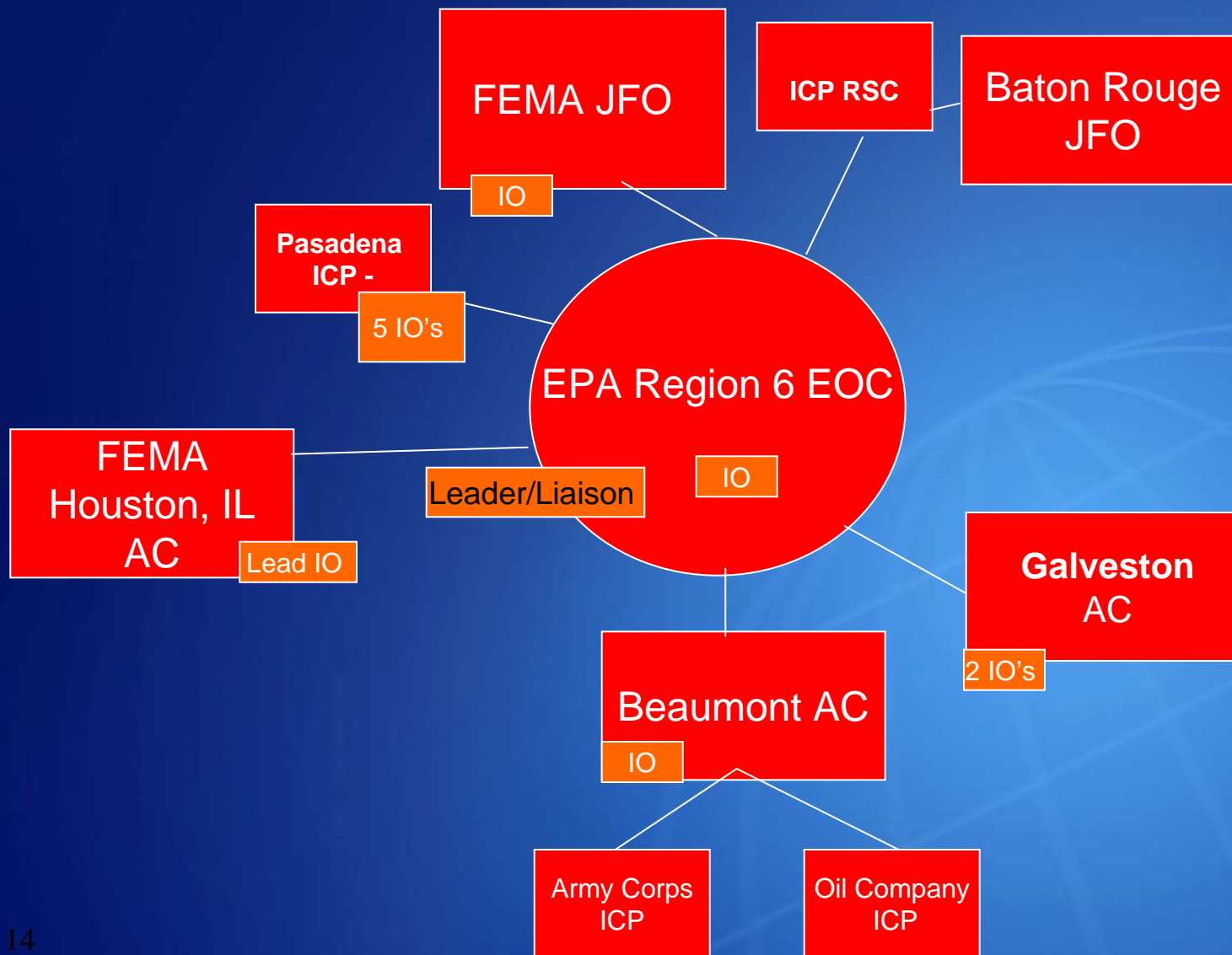


- ◆ Hurricane Ike
- ◆ Caterpillar Oil Spill
- ◆ Community Outreach Response Team





Hurricane IKE





Hurricane Ike

- ◆ Deployment to Texas Oct 2008
- ◆ 10 PIOs deployed on ESF-15 Mission Statement
- ◆ Under the leadership of Region 6 -
- ◆ First Step - Organized a planning meeting
- ◆ Defined goals and responsibilities in each area
- ◆ Spoke with one voice – one message
- ◆ Helped each other – even through the tough times
- ◆ Good news stories and thousands of flyers distributed



If you call them, they will come

- ◆ Came from Atlanta, New York, Dallas, San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Kansas City, Washington DC





Prepare/Exercise the plan: Get information out that is clear and concise quickly and accurately



(Top) Drums from Hurricane Ike, Houston TX,

(R) Talking with local residents in Galveston

Hurricane Ike Images



- ◆ At the staging area with reporters





Caterpillar Oil Spill

- ◆ Story broke at 5pm Sunday night
- ◆ Press Release sent by CG at 5pm
- ◆ By 7:00 PM received 70 media calls
- ◆ By Midnight 100 calls - including many live on air
- ◆ Handling rumors
- ◆ Monday – press conference before noon
- ◆ Calls stopped within an hour of the press conference

Caterpillar Oil Spill



[Caterpillar Oil Spill - News- msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com)

A holding tank at a *Caterpillar* facility in Joliet broke open Sunday, spilling thousands of gallons of *oil* sludge.
www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29091967/ - 39k -

Feb 9, 2009 ... *Caterpillar* has hired a contractor to clean up *oil* sludge that *spilled* on the ground, using excavation equipment, he said. ...
archives.chicagotribune.com/2009/feb/09/local/chi-oil-spill-09-feb09 - 24k - -



News Stories



CHICAGO (AP) – Illinois authorities have filed a lawsuit against Caterpillar Inc. after oil that overflowed from company waste treatment tanks spilled into a suburban Chicago river.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow filed the seven count complaint Monday in Will County alleging several violations, including endangering the environment.

The complaint seeks thousands of dollars in penalties from the Peoria based maker of construction and mining equipment.

Around 65,000 gallons of oil overflowed from the Joliet facility. About 6,500 gallons flowed into the Des Plaines River.

Glasgow says Caterpillar acted fast to report the Feb. 8 incident and there was no major environmental damage. But he wants Caterpillar to ensure such spills can't happen again.

There were 900 different media outlets that picked up the story. If you google Caterpillar Oil Spill you will find there are **388,000 places** to find the story



Things to remember

- ◆ Move quickly and answer all calls
- ◆ Stop the rumors
- ◆ Clarify information
- ◆ Negotiate with other partners
- ◆ Work closely with the Incident Commander
- ◆ Hotwash



How regions work internally as a team

- ◆ Community Outreach Response Team (CORT)
- ◆ OUTREACH Special team in Region IX's Incident Management Team
- ◆ Comprised of Response Support Corps (RSC) members
- ◆ Supports and enhances EPA's regional/national Crisis Communication Strategy
- ◆ Organized, trained, ready to deploy





CORT Training Objectives

- ◆ How community outreach during crisis differs from normal circumstances
- ◆ How crisis communication differs from public affairs/media relations
- ◆ How to evaluate community needs after a disaster
- ◆ How to act on that evaluation
- ◆ Role play in realistic disaster scenarios



Exercise Scenario

- ◆ Major earthquake in Bay Area
- ◆ Contaminated materials entering S.F. Bay and ocean; HHW issues
- ◆ Volunteers (mostly untrained) cleaning up beaches, saving oiled birds
- ◆ Public outreach needed to explain hazards of HHW and need for proper disposal, danger of oil on beaches, risks in handling wildlife
- ◆ PIO requests CORT assistance



What We Asked Them to Do

- ◆ Breakout groups asked to develop step-by-step process for addressing these needs.
- ◆ How would you develop necessary products?
- ◆ What types and why?
- ◆ How would they get approved?
- ◆ How would they get distributed?
- ◆ How would you anticipate and deal with communication/coordination issues?
- ◆ How would you report back on your activities?

Each group reported out in detail on how they addressed the above issues.



QUESTIONS

