

City of Novi Emergency Management Program

INTRODUCTION

While recent disaster events, primarily September 11th and Hurricane Katrina, have highlighted the need and importance of emergency management, the necessity existed well before these two high-profile incidents. Recent National Intelligence Estimates assess that extremist and radical groups will continue to plot terrorist attacks against the United States primarily focused on prominent political, economic and infrastructure targets; with a goal of producing mass casualties, immense destruction, economic ruin, and widespread fear among US citizens. Particularly at the local level of government, the initial response to a disaster or terrorist attack is critical and often initially overwhelmed by the size and scope of the incident. Proper planning is critical to the ability of a local governmental unit to respond to the needs of its citizens during a large scale emergency.

This document outlines current resources and activities of the City of Novi's Emergency Management Program and how current capabilities will shape future activities and programs. Generally, emergency management functions fall into one of four categories (or phases) of emergency management: Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

- **Mitigation** involves activities that eliminate the possibility of a specific disaster occurring or actions that minimize the chances of said disaster taking place, such as adherence to building codes in earthquake prone areas or dredging of rivers to minimize the occurrence of flooding.
- **Preparedness** activities are actions taken by governments, organizations, or individuals so they can be ready to respond when a disaster takes place. Families making home emergency kits, governments mounting training exercises, and businesses establishing continuity of operations plans are examples of preparedness activities.
- **Response** activities take place after the beginning of an emergency or disaster. These activities include search and rescue, medical care, and sheltering.
- **Recovery** operations take place in order to return systems to normal as soon as possible. Short-term recovery involves the re-establishment of vital systems such as electricity and water availability. Long-term recovery may take place over months and years depending on the scope of the disaster.

Traditionally, public perception of emergency management involved only police, fire, and emergency medical service units. Modern emergency management, however, involves all units of government, private organizations, businesses, and individual volunteers. This document reviews the emergency management activities of the City of Novi from the modern day perspective.

BACKGROUND

Chapter 14 of the Novi Code of Ordinances empowers the Mayor, with the approval of City Council, to establish an Office of Emergency Management with an administrative head, known as the Coordinator. The current Emergency Management Coordinator in the City of Novi is the Chief of Police. This does not empower the Police Department solely with emergency management activities. Rather, all departments within the City of Novi must play an active role in planning for and mitigating emergency operations; whether man-made or natural disasters - coordinated or led by the Police Chief.

The general role of the Coordinator is to direct emergency response for the City of Novi to maximize the city's ability to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a large scale emergency situation. Duties include being responsible for citizen preparedness, volunteer response, and the overall effectiveness of professional responders.

Chapter 14 also calls for an Assistant Coordinator from each City department to be appointed by the department head. The role of the Assistant Coordinators is to help manage resources from the various City departments that could be useful for emergency response. Assistant Coordinators could also be called upon to assume the duties of the Coordinator in his/her absence.

Under Public Act 390, the Emergency Management Act, the City of Novi does not operate as a statutorily recognized Emergency Response organization. Rather, the City of Novi functions under the auspices of the Oakland County Office of Emergency Response and Preparedness (OC ERP). In practical terms, this means Novi can not appeal directly to the state government in order to obtain a gubernatorial declaration of emergency. The Novi Emergency Management Coordinator must contact the OC ERP,

who then contacts the State government and requests a declaration of emergency. While this may at first glance appear to be counterproductive, it is beneficial in limiting the administrative burden the City has with enormous amounts of annual reporting requirements for independent emergency management agencies.

The programs and capabilities of Novi's Emergency Management Program will be described in three major areas: Citizen Preparedness and volunteer response, interdepartmental cooperation and activities, and interagency cooperation and mutual aid.

CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS AND VOLUNTEER RESPONSE

Effective emergency management programs, especially at the local level, have long operated with the knowledge that a large scale emergency/disaster can and will quickly overwhelm the ability of the local organization's ability to respond. Because of this, it is crucial citizens are prepared to take care of themselves and their neighbors to the extent possible until additional responders can be put in place to address the scope and size of the disaster.

The City of Novi has embarked on a campaign of public information to alert and educate Novi community members about ways they can improve their level of preparedness. The Police Department, in conjunction with the Community Relations function of the Business and Neighborhood Relations Group, has embarked on the development of an emergency preparedness handbook to be distributed to community members and staff. The handbook will contain information to help those prepare to assist their families, neighbors, and co-workers in case of a large scale incident. Emergency preparedness information has also been posted on the City of Novi website (cityofnovi.org), along with links to other pertinent sites such as ready.gov. Novi should continue to educate its' citizens in preparedness utilizing as many forms of communication media as necessary. The City of Novi will continue to instruct community members to have enough food, water and basic necessities to survive up to 72 hours.

Recognizing that local responders may be initially overwhelmed and outside assistance may be delayed, Novi has developed a corps of citizen volunteers to assist emergency

personnel until additional resources can respond to assist. This volunteer initiative is the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The main goal of the CERT program is to train volunteers and have them ready to assist Novi emergency responders in case of a large-scale emergency or disaster. CERT teams are trained in areas such as medical triage, light search and rescue, and disaster psychology. They can be activated at the order of the Emergency Management Coordinator. CERT members are provided with a backpack of emergency response tools and agree to respond to a local emergency when available. CERT was developed in the early 1980's in California and has spread throughout the country. In the 1990's, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) adopted CERT as one of its national programs - although it continues to be managed at the local level.

Currently, the Novi CERT group has 101 fully-trained volunteers. An overarching goal exists to have 150 CERT volunteers trained by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2007/08. In addition to the initial volunteer training, the CERT group will continue to meet on a quarterly schedule to refresh, expand and update their training. The Novi Police Department has taken the lead role in the CERT program and has received training support from the Novi Fire Department. Logistical support has also been provided by personnel from the Business and Neighborhood Relations Group.

A secondary goal of the CERT program is to help educate community members of individual and family preparedness efforts by offering training in this area. CERT members have already taken part in activities such as the Fall for Novi event and have provided staffing to disseminate preparedness information at informational booths. CERT members and leadership will continue to educate individual citizens and community members as they work towards preparing their families, homes, and businesses for a natural or man-made disaster.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION AND ACTIVITIES

Emergency response is not the sole responsibility of any one profession such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, or the fire discipline. These professions must work in concert to properly plan, respond and recover from a disaster. Effective

emergency management is also not limited to these traditional response groups but should encompass every department in the City to best serve the citizens. Our Business and Neighborhood Relations Group has played an integral role in the development of the Novi CERT program, especially in the areas of recruitment, marketing and logistics, while Police and Fire personnel have lead the way in training, program development and administration. In fact, our CERT program is an excellent example of multiple departments working together to improve citizen and community preparedness. Continued cooperation between these departments is crucial to the improvement of citizen and professional emergency response.

The Police Department has been active in educating City staff in areas of preparedness and safety. Twice in the last four years, all City personnel have been trained in personal safety, building evacuations, and tornado and fire procedures. This training has helped raise the level of awareness by staff in terms of building security and increased their awareness level making them more active in recognizing potential safety issues in the workplace, including impending storms or suspicious persons.

Other City departments must become more involved in emergency management. Recently members of our Community Development Department, Police Department and CERT program took part in a two-hour basic damage assessment class. This assessment capability and function is a critical step towards obtaining a gubernatorial or presidential declaration of disaster through Oakland County Emergency Response and Preparedness.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) plays a vital role in mitigation, response and recovery operations - depending on the type of emergency. Public Works has 30 full-time staff members and 25 part-time personnel available to assist in recovery and restoration efforts. In addition, Director McCusker has secured reciprocal mutual aid agreements with 13 communities throughout Oakland County to assist in the event the City of Novi is affected. Traditionally, Public Works staff has coordinated and lead debris removal, water/wastewater operations and protection, street/road maintenance and solid waste collection and disposal. Public works staff will play an essential role in ensuring lifeline restoration (water, gas, electrical) and will serve as the liaison with public utility entities. Public Works resources relative to Emergency Management and disaster

restoration include 15 dump trucks, three generators, one hydraulic truck crane and two wheel loaders.

Our City administrators and elected officials should also be educated on their roles and responsibilities during an emergency. All City departments, regardless of scope or mission, must take part in basic National Incident Management System (NIMS) training to ensure improved use of effective management skills during ongoing response operations and disasters. In September 2007, the ability to apply for and accept federal grant funding will be tied to the municipalities' successful completion of required segments of NIMS training.

Several City departments have also trained together to improve response capabilities. In November 2006, an active shooter training scenario took place at Novi High School. School staff and student volunteers were utilized and the Police and Fire Departments responded to this mock-disaster incident. Administrators from the various departments and the Novi Community School District were on hand as observers and evaluators. The training was highly beneficial to all parties involved and increased the awareness of all school staff present.

Field training exercises with multiple City departments should continue to be scheduled, along with smaller exercises, such as table-top training scenarios. This inter-departmental training will continue to benefit all. As training scenarios improve, CERT volunteers and outside agencies can be called upon to participate; thus improving our response capabilities. Inter-departmental cooperation should be stressed and maximized at every opportunity as a multi-disciplinary, multi-departmental response is crucial in delivering the most beneficial response to all involved.

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION AND MUTUAL AID

Local units of government have rarely required high-cost resources for an emergency and thus have not been able to fiscally justify large scale purchases. When the need does arrive; however, the lack of proper resources such as fire trucks, heavy loaders, etc. can bring even the most highly trained responders to a stop. Interagency cooperation and mutual aid have been beneficial to local units of government in this

area. Agencies work together and each makes a small investment in emergency response resources, and agrees to help each other when called upon to do so. This mutual aid makes certain that a proper response will be available in case of a disaster and minimizes the financial burden on any one unit of government.

The Novi Police Department has been a member of the Oakland County Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreement since November 1988. This inter-agency agreement is between more than 33 law enforcement agencies in Oakland County and is intended to provide assistance to one another in emergency situations requiring a large number of trained public safety personnel and specialized emergency equipment. This agreement was utilized multiple times in the mid 1990's when the City of Novi and other municipalities had large number of striking workers demonstrate at local Detroit Newspaper distribution sites. For several weeks the Novi Police Department would assist other law enforcement agencies by sending platoons of trained officers to various sites throughout Oakland and Macomb Counties to mitigate their union demonstrations.

The Novi Fire Department has been a member of the Western Wayne Hazardous Incident Response Team (HIRT) for more than 20 years. The cost of hazardous material response equipment is shared by approximately two dozen agencies, and each agency makes personnel available for training and response should the need arise. Mutual aid agreements also exist with the Michigan Urban Search and Rescue (MUSAR) team, as well as the Oakland County Hazardous Response and Technical Rescue Team. Western Wayne HIRT has also been developing a Technical Rescue Group, and the Novi Fire Department has also made personnel available for this team. Continued participation in multi-agency teams will keep a highly capable response and recovery operation available to Novi in the event it is needed.

Both the Novi Police and Fire Departments have mutual aid agreements in place with surrounding agencies in case of a large scale incident. Depending upon the scope of the disaster, resources from the State of Michigan and Oakland County Sheriff are also available if needed.

EMERGENCY PLANS IN PLACE

In 2003, the Novi Police Department developed a Disaster Preparedness Plan for our community consistent with, and to be used in conjunction with, the Oakland County Emergency Operations Plan. This plan was reviewed and adopted in September 2003. Senior staff from the Police and Fire Departments is currently reviewing this document and changes and updates are expected very soon.

As part of the United States' National Response Plan (NRP), Novi has adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) to improve emergency response and eliminate confusion in a multi-agency response. The ICS has been developed and formally recognized as a valid and proven incident management system.

There are four major sections of a NIMS/ICS response: Operations, Logistics, Planning and Finance. The overall command of these sections is handled by an Incident Commander (IC) with assistance from command staff positions (Safety Officer, Public Information, and Liaison Officer). Leaders from City departments including the Manager's Office, Engineering, Finance, and Community Development will play pivotal roles in filling the Operations, Logistics, Planning and Finance components of ICS; while Community relations will assist in coordinating the Public Information component and Police and Fire personnel will typically staff Safety and Liaison positions. Depending on the nature of the emergency, the Incident Commander (IC) or lead agency may vary depending on scope or threat (i.e. building collapse – FD is the IC, water emergency – DPW is the IC, civil disturbance – PD is the IC), however, the same Incident Command System and structure remains the same. The City of Novi's Disaster Preparedness Plan identifies the lead response department (Police, Fire DPW, etc.) as well as support positions for multiple disaster scenarios.

Establishing a proper chain of command and NIMS structure is often very difficult because most, if not all, initial responders are overwhelmed trying to merely stabilize a situation. Additional resources are needed to properly respond to the incident and these resources may not be immediately available.

To alleviate potential problems of this nature, the Oakland County Incident Management Team (OC-IMT) was formed in January 2007. The goal of the OC-IMT is to assist a local agency's emergency response by making personnel available who are trained in the National Incident Management System and can staff some positions, with emphasis in the Logistics and Planning Sections. This assistance means the local Incident Commander remains in charge and more local agency responders are available for the Operations Section (response and recovery). Currently the IMT has 33 members from 22 different Oakland County police, fire, and emergency management agencies, including staff from the Novi Police and Fire Departments. At the request of a local emergency management coordinator, the OC-IMT will send staff as needed to assist with the management of the incident response. The IMT will continue to meet monthly to further develop response protocols and continue training its members. Because the City of Novi has committed to the team, it is available for deployment when needed.

EMERGENCY RELIEF LOCATIONS AND CITY FACILITIES

Following the massive electrical blackout of 2003, City administrators had the vision to formally establish multiple Emergency Relief Locations at strategic locations throughout our community to effectively serve community members during emergency situations. Five Emergency Relief Districts were developed and relief locations were established within or in close proximity to the district. The locations are as follows:

- District One: Northeast District of Novi – Meadowbrook Elementary School
- District Two: Northwest District of Novi – Geisler Middle School - Pontiac Trail
- District Three: Western District of Novi – Novi Middle School
- District Four: Central District of Novi – Novi Civic Center
- District Five: Eastern District of Novi – Village Oaks Elementary

By sharing facilities and services with the Novi and Walled Lake Community School Districts, the City of Novi is able to capitalize on spacious buildings appropriately equipped with back-up generators and air conditioning units. All emergency relief stations have the ability to hold hundreds of community members and can receive and store emergency supplies (water, medicine, etc.) in the event an emergency strikes.

In order to ensure seamless delivery of services during an emergency, the City of Novi upgraded the emergency back-up generators at the Civic Center, Police Department, all four Fire Stations and the DPW. In addition, Meadowbrook Commons and the Senior Center can be connected to a portable generator often utilized by the DPW as a source of back-up power for our sewage lift stations. In addition, an emergency surplus of hundreds of cases of bottled water is maintained between the Civic Center, DPW, Police Department and Meadowbrook Commons.

EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER

Emergency operations centers (EOC) are the single most critical coordination locations during any emergency or disaster. An EOC lacking technical materials or equipment, or staffed with employees without proper training, can create confusion and a crisis within itself. The City of Novi EOC is located in the Police Training Center at Novi Police Headquarters. The EOC is a facility fully equipped with 12 direct phone lines, four PBX phone lines, 10 computer data connections and a dedicated fax number. The center also has cable, satellite and conventional aerial television connections for live media broadcasts. Satellite telephone service was recently installed with the addition of a satellite base station to ensure secure and continual communications when traditional landline and cellular networks are not available. Funding will be requested to upgrade the television monitors in the EOC to digital flat-screens to maximize space and ensure quick setup of the center.

One of the primary limitations of our EOC is size. Encompassing 1500 square feet, the EOC can be filled quickly with operational and support personnel. Future Police Department expansion plans will provide approximately 900 additional square feet of much needed space for the EOC. A secondary limitation of our EOC is computer hardware. This limitation was addressed in the 2007/2008 budgetary process and all computers are in the process of being replaced. Large, stationary desktop computers will now be replaced with portable laptop computers officials can move throughout the center depending on the circumstance or emergency.

A back-up EOC has been established at Fire Station #4 on Ten Mile Road at Wixom Road. Funding has been requested (via federal forfeiture funds) to mirror the equipment

and capabilities at this EOC to the current center at Police Headquarters. Currently the back-up EOC has four direct dial phone lines, four PBX phone lines and 17 computer data connections. There are two televisions at this site that operate strictly from a cable network.

SUMMARY

In order to properly and effectively mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a large scale emergency or disaster, the City of Novi has used a multi-faceted approach that involves citizens, several city departments, and outside agencies as needed.

Novi has initiated an aggressive education campaign to ensure citizens are prepared to take care of themselves and their loved ones in the event of a large incident. The development of the Community Emergency Response Team is a quantum leap in assisting responders who may be initially overwhelmed during the first stages of an emergency. CERT members have been, and will continue to be, active in multiple public education venues.

Departments within the City have worked together to improve emergency response by training together when possible and have worked cooperatively in developing citizen programs. All City departments can and must play a role in emergency response and management. City employees have been trained in emergency situations that could happen in the workplace.

The Police and Fire Departments have entered into mutual aid agreements with surrounding agencies to make available outside resources in time of crisis. They have also been active in multi-agency response groups to maximize available resources while minimizing financial burdens. These agencies include Western Wayne Hazardous Incident response Team and the Oakland County Incident Management Team.

The Emergency Management Program in the City of Novi will continue to work in these areas in an effort to constantly improve the emergency response capabilities to benefits the citizens of Novi.

Future Emergency Preparedness Goals – In Order of Priority – 1-13:

1. Increase emergency management training for Police and Fire personnel. This will enhance our **mitigation, preparedness, response** and **recovery** functions.
2. Provide NIMS training for city staff and administration to enhance **mitigation, preparedness, response** and **recovery** initiatives.
3. Distribute Emergency Preparedness Guides to all community members. This will enhance our **preparedness** efforts.
4. Research feasibility of hiring a civilian, Emergency Management Specialist to oversee all **mitigation, preparedness, response** and **recovery** efforts in the City of Novi.
5. Continue to seek state and federal grant emergency management funding to enhance our communities **mitigation, preparedness, response** and **recovery** goals.
6. Continue table-top and real-time disaster and emergency preparedness exercises and drills. This will significantly enhance our **response** and **recovery** efforts.
7. Continue to cultivate Novi's CERT program by recruiting, training and retaining community members as volunteers. This will further enhance our **preparedness, response** and **recovery** efforts.
8. Continue preparedness education for business leaders and community members to enhance our **preparedness** efforts.
9. Enhance shared service of the WOVI 89.5 emergency broadcasting partnership with the Novi Community School District to further build upon our **preparedness** and **response** initiatives.

10. Continue to upgrade and utilize the Dialogic Communicator system to inform community members of emergency events. This improves our **response** and **recovery** capabilities.
11. Enhance emergency communication with community members through upgrades in our Dialogic System (reverse 911). This will allow us to build upon **response** and **recovery** efforts.
12. Fully fund and complete a back-up EOC at Fire Station #4 to increase our **response** and **recovery** efforts.
13. Continue quarterly testing of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to improve our **response** and **recovery** efforts.

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BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Information for this paper was gathered from the following sources: Novi Police Department, Novi Fire Department, Oakland County Office of Emergency Response and Preparedness, Oakland County Incident Management Team, Chapter 14 Novi Code of Ordinances, Non-Law Enforcement Sensitive Intelligence Bulletins, Michigan Public Act 390, and the ICMA's Homeland Security: Best Practices for Local Government.