

Session No. 38

Course Title: Social Dimensions of Disaster, 2nd edition

Session 38: Field Trip: Local Emergency Management Agency

1 hr.

Objectives:

- 38.1 Describe the mission of a local emergency management agency
- 38.2 Discuss the organizational structure of a local emergency management agency
- 38.3 Describe at least four types of key interagency relationships
- 38.4 Discuss the history of a local emergency management agency and its predecessors, e.g., civil defense
- 38.5 Describe the management structure and major equipment that comprise the emergency operations center (EOC) within a local emergency management agency
- 38.6 Describe the conclusions of at least one research study focused on a local emergency management agency.

Scope:

Through a field trip (or guest lecture) to a local emergency management agency, students are introduced to the mission, structure, history, interagency relationships, and an example research study.

Readings:

Student Reading:

Green, Walter G. III. 2001. "The State of the Local EOC: A Preliminary Study." *Journal of the American Society of Professional Emergency Planners* 8:71-85.

Professor Readings:

Kendra, James and Tricia Wachtendorf. 2003. "Creativity in Emergency Response to the World Trade Center Disaster." Pp. 121- 146 in *Beyond September 11th: An Account of Post-Disaster Research*, Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center, Public Entity Risk Institute, and Institute for Civil Infrastructure Systems.

Special Publication No. 39. Boulder, Colorado: Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center, University of Colorado.

Background References:

Selves, Michael D. 2003. "The Politics of Disaster: Principles for Local Emergency Managers and Elected Officials." *Journal of the American Society of Professional Emergency Planners* 10:77-82.

Turner, B.A. 1995. "The Role of Flexibility and Improvisation in Emergency Response." Pp. 463-475 in *Natural Risk and Civil Protection*, edited by Tom Horlick-Jones, Aniello Amendola and Riccardo Casale. London: E & FN SPON/Chapman & Hall.

Pickett, John H. and Barbara A. Block. 1991. "Day-to-Day Management." Pp. 263-288 in *Emergency Management: Principles and Practice for Local Government*, edited by Thomas E. Drabek and Gerard J. Hoetmer. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association.

General Requirements:

Field trip arrangements.

Student Handout 38-1 (appended).

See individual requirements for each objective.

Objective 38.1 Describe the mission of a local emergency management agency.

Requirements:

Field trip arrangements.

Student Handout 38-1.

Remarks:

- I. Agency arrangements.
 - A. **Student liability** waivers may be required.
 - B. **Directions** for student questions (as specified in the Course Syllabus; Session 1, Student Handout 1-2) should be reviewed.

C. **Directions** for the Field Trip Reaction Reports (as specified in the Course Syllabus; Session 1, Student Handout 1-2) should be reviewed.

1. Length.

2. Content.

D. **Directions** for transportation.

1. Driving instructions.

2. Car pooling.

E. **Distribute** Student Handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency”.

F. **Explain:** the list of questions contained on Student Handout 38-1 (“Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency”) can serve as a note-taking aid.

II. **Speaker briefing.**

A. **Emphasize:** factual information is desired, not a “public relations” presentation.

B. **Emphasize:** students have been required to prepare questions; allow 15-20 minutes for this.

C. **Explain:** a list of questions and topics will be provided that can structure the presentation (Student Handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency”).

D. **Explain:** students have been assigned a research article (Green 2001); provide a copy or summary.

III. Mission: Local Emergency Management Agency.

A. **Speaker** responses to **question number 1** on Student Handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency”.

B. **Student questions** may add illustrations and clarification.

Supplemental Considerations:

Field trips can be a **high point** in the course. This depends, however, on the **thoroughness of preparation** by the professor. Experience suggests that some students

may **arrive late** to the agency unless the importance of a **timely arrival** is stressed and **driving instructions**, including parking locations, are provided. Similarly, the **focus** and **quality** of the agency presentation will be **enhanced** if the professor **meets with** the representative a few weeks **prior** to the field trip. A copy of the **question list**, i.e., Student Handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency,” **Course Syllabus**, and the **article assigned** for student reading (Green 2001), can provide **requisite context**. Experience suggests that time allocation for **student questions** must be **emphasized**. Most agency representatives **enjoy** describing their work, agency mission, etc., and **easily forget** the student question **requirement**. Students should be encouraged to **car pool** as this provides **opportunity** to discuss the agency visit during the return to campus.

Given that many local emergency managers tend to **focus** on response and preparedness activities, the professor may wish to discuss **recovery** and **mitigation** priorities with the speaker **prior** to the class meeting. In some cases this may actually **precipitate** some **rethinking** by the local emergency manager. The professor might **add** separate **questions** on these two topics or **elaborate** on the issue during the **pre-trip** meeting.

Objective 38.2 Discuss the organizational structure of a local emergency management agency.

Requirements:

Field trip arrangements.

Student Handout 38-1.

Remarks:

- I. Agency arrangements and speaker briefing (see above, i.e., Objective 38.1, Sections I and II).
- II. Local emergency management agency organizational structure.
 - A. **Speaker** responses to **question number 2** on Student Handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency.”
 - B. **Student questions** may add illustrations and clarification.

Supplemental Considerations:

(Same as those for Objective 38.1).

Objective 38.3 Describe at least four types of key interagency relationships.

Requirements:

Field trip arrangements.

Student Handout 38-1.

Remarks:

- I. Agency arrangements and speaker briefing (see above, i.e., Objective 38-1, Sections I and II).
- II. Local emergency management agency interagency relationships.
 - A. **Speaker** responses to **question number 3** on Student Handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency.”
 - B. **Student questions** may add illustrations and clarification.

Supplemental Considerations:

(Same as those for Objective 38.1).

Objective 38.4 Discuss the history of a local emergency management agency and its predecessors, e.g., civil defense.

Requirements:

Field trip arrangements.

Student Handout 38-1.

Remarks:

- I. Agency arrangements and speaker briefing (see above, i.e., Objective 38-1, Sections I and II).
- II. History of the local emergency management agency.
 - A. **Speaker** responses to **question number 4** on Student handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency.”
 - B. **Student** questions may add illustrations and clarification.

Supplemental Considerations:

(Same as those for Objective 38.1).

Objective 38.5 Describe the management structure and major equipment that comprise the emergency operations center (EOC) within a local emergency management agency.

Requirements:

Field trip arrangements.

Student Handout 38-1.

Remarks:

- I. Agency arrangements and speaker briefing (see above, i.e., Objective 38-1, Sections I and II).
- II. EOC management structure and equipment.
 - A. **Speaker** responses to question number 5 on Student Handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency.”
 - B. **Student** questions may add illustrations and clarification.

Supplemental Considerations:

(Same as those for Objective 38.1).

Objective 38.6 Describe the conclusions of at least one research study focused on a local emergency management agency.

Requirements:

Field trip arrangements.

Student Handout 38-1.

Remarks:

- I. Agency arrangements and speaker briefing (see above, i.e., Objective 38-1, Sections I and II).
- II. Local emergency management agency changes and challenges.

- A. **Speaker** responses to **questions 6 and 7** on Student Handout 38-1; “Field Trip Questions: Local Emergency Management Agency.”
 - B. **Student** questions may add illustration and clarification.
- III. Research study: Green (2001) (assigned student reading).
- A. **Professor** or **students** may refer to this study in questions posed to the speaker.
 - B. **Highlight** such points as these (adapted from Green 2001).
 - 1. **Research question:** What characterizes emergency operations centers (EOCs) within the U.S.A.?
 - 2. **Prior studies.**
 - a. Case studies of disasters, e.g., Averch and Dluhy 1997.
 - b. National survey, e.g., Nehnevajsa 1990.
 - 3. **Green survey.**
 - a. Eight states, e.g., Maine, South Carolina, Illinois, California (p. 73).
 - b. Two-page mailed questionnaire (52% return rate, n = 332) (p. 73).
 - 4. **Primary and alternate EOCs** (p. 74).
 - a. Jurisdiction types.
 - 1) Combined city and county – 41%.
 - 2) County only – 44%.
 - 3) City only – 4%.
 - 4) Other – 4% (e.g., village, townships, etc.)
 - b. Alternate facility: 30% planned to use other organizations either within or outside local jurisdiction.
 - 5. **Survivability** (pp. 75-77).

- a. 81% faced one or more hazards, e.g., near fault line.
- b. Supplies, e.g., medium of 3 days if cut off from outside support.
- c. Security, e.g., 90% controlled access and 50% used a guard.

6. **Information management** (pp. 77-78).

- a. 1 to 10 communications systems; medium = 5.
- b. Radio systems.
 - 1) Local public safety = 87%
 - 2) Amateur = 67%
 - 3) Government high frequency = 50%
- c. Use of computers.
 - 1) Internet use = 85%
 - 2) EOC being “computerized” = 55%
 - 3) Proportion of staff computer proficient = 20%

7. **Organizational structure and staffing** (pp. 78-79).

- a. Use of Incident Command System (ICS) = 33%
- b. Use of four group structure (i.e., policy, operations, resource, and disaster analysis group) = 21%
- c. Use normal departmental organization = 18%
- d. Use emergency support function model = 13%
- e. Use combination of above = 14%

Supplemental Considerations:

Through **questions** to the speaker and **very brief** comment, the professor may assist students in **bridging the gap** that too often remains between material presented in an academic journal article and a personal visit to a local agency. Depending on the **quality** of the speaker responses to **questions 6 and 7** and the student questions, **minimal**

comment may be necessary by the professor. It is **essential**, however, that any **deficiencies** be overcome if there is a gap between the academic material and the practitioner presentation.

Course Developer References:

- I. Averch, Harvey and Milan J. Dluhy. 1997. "Crisis Decision-Making and Management." Pp. 75-91 in *Hurricane Andrew: Ethnicity, Gender, and the Sociology of Disasters*, edited by Walter Gillis Peacock, Betty Hearn Morrow and Hugh Gladwin. London and New York: Routledge.
- II. Green, Walter G. III. 2001. "The State of the Local EOC: A Preliminary Study." *Journal of the American Society of Professional Emergency Planners* 8:71-85.
- III. Kendra, James and Tricia Wachtendorf. 2003. "Creativity in Emergency Response to the World Trade Center Disaster." Pp. 121-146 in *Beyond September 11th: An Account of Post-Disaster Research*. Special Publication No. 39. Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center, Public Entity Risk Institute, and Institute for Civil Infrastructure Systems. Boulder, Colorado: Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center.
- IV. Nehnevajsa, Jiri. 1990. *Emergency Preparedness: Reports and Reflections of Local and County Emergency Managers*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Emergency Management Agency (as cited in Green 2001, p. 83).
- V. Pickett, John H. and Barbara A. Block. 1991. "Day-to-Day Management." Pp. 263-288 in *Emergency Management: Principles and Practice for Local Government*, edited by Thomas E. Drabek and Gerard J. Hoetmer. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association.
- VI. Selves, Michael D. 2003. "The Politics of Disaster: Principles for Local Emergency Managers and Elected Officials." *Journal of the American Society of Professional Emergency Planners* 10:77-82.
- VII. Turner, B.A. 1995. "The Role of Flexibility and Improvisation in Emergency Response." Pp. 463-475 in *Natural Risk and Civil Protection*, edited by Tom Horlick-Jones, Aniello Amendola and Riccardo Casale. London: E & FN SPON/Chapman & Hall.