Crisis Leadership and Decision Making

32nd Annual Governor’s Hurricane Conference
West Palm Beach, FL
15 May 2018
Welcome

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Administrative Information

- 4-hour seminar
- Breaks
- Materials:
  - Forms:
    - Registration
    - Assessment
  - Participant guide
  - Executive Handbook
Course Objectives

• Participants will be able to:

1. Identify the prominent facts of the selected case study.

2. Explain the importance of having plans in place that are adequate, feasible, adaptable, and all-hazards based.

3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of senior officials in the event of a disaster or emergency.
Course Objectives

• Participants will be able to:

4. Examine the importance of rapid and accurate communication / information flow as a pivotal function of leadership in a crisis.

5. Understand the roles, responsibilities, resources and associated structure, leadership, and planning necessary for effective recovery.

6. Develop an action plan to capitalize on the lessons learned from the case study by relating them to the local jurisdiction.
Introductions

Name / Organization / Title / Position

What leadership characteristic is most important in the midst of a crisis?
Introduction to a Catastrophe
July 18, 2001
Introduction to a Catastrophe

- Baltimore is the principle metropolitan area in Maryland
- Home to Port of Baltimore & Baltimore-Washington International Airport
- Central transportation hub for the Northeast corridor
- Major transportation point for the movement of freight
A look below Howard Street

Light Rail

Howard Street

Depth of tunnel from 3 feet to 49 feet below the street.

Tunnel built using 30 million bricks.

Initially two trains could transit at the same time; today's trains are too wide.

27 feet
Introduction to a Catastrophe

- **July 18, 3:00 p.m.:**
  - Fans going to Camden Yard to see 2nd game of a day-night doubleheader
  - Rush hour traffic beginning-Howard Street a major connector
Introduction to a Catastrophe

- 3:04–3:07 p.m.:
  - CSX freight train with 60 cars enters south end of tunnel; 31 cars carrying mixed cargo (paper products, plywood, soy oil, & chemicals)
  - Engineers hear grinding noise, air pressure in brake line drops to 0; train lurches & comes to a rough stop
Introduction to a Catastrophe

• 3:15–4:30 p.m.:
  – Crew members radio CSX dispatchers; smoke increasing; hazardous materials in many of tank cars
  – CSX dispatch notifies city fire dept. by phone; public reports of smoke coming out of manhole on north end of Howard Street
Introduction to a Catastrophe
• North Terminal area: Mt. Royal Station of state run light rail system, an art school, a concert hall, & opera house

• In between: Holiday Inn, state office buildings, & many businesses

• Within 1,000–2,000 feet of tunnel: 3 hospitals, a market, a museum, convention center, & a courthouse

• Water main break & manhole

• South Terminal area: Camden Yards, Inner Harbor, aquarium, restaurants, & shops
Focus Areas

- Planning for Effective Disaster Response
- Leadership & Decision Making
- Crisis Communications
- Recovery
Planning for Effective Disaster Response
Planning for Effective Disaster Response

“In preparing for battle, I have found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.”
Planning for Effective Disaster Response

• What plans were in place & were they sufficient?

• What role should senior officials play in the planning process?

• What about your plans?
Leadership and Decision Making

• O’Malley decided his own role would be “to become the best deputy the fire chief ever had and [to] force these other agencies to cooperate.”
  – Chief McDonald
Leadership and Decision Making

• What actions were taken by decision makers in this case?
• How do senior leaders gain & maintain situational awareness?
• What about your leaders?
“We live in the midst of alarms, anxiety beclouds the future; we expect some new disaster with each newspaper we read.”
Crisis Communications

- What communication & coordination challenges did senior officials encounter?
- How does the media impact decision making & public actions?
- What about your public’s expectations?
Recovery

Recovery Continuum

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Recovery

• What were the short-term recovery requirements associated with this disaster?
• How do leaders ensure successful recovery?
• What about your recovery plans?
Action Plan

• Identify issues for further consideration / action:
  – Planning
  – Decision Making
  – Communications
  – Recovery
Summary

• Examined the dynamics of crisis leadership & decision making as it applied to the Baltimore tunnel fire

• Discussed the importance of:
  – Planning for Effective Disaster Response
  – Leadership & Decision Making
  – Crisis Communications
  – Recovery

• Developed an Action Plan
Thank you for your participation!