

A CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT: PREPAREDNESS PLANNING PART 3

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In this series of articles, a consequence management approach to the reactive elements of disaster management is discussed. The basic departure point of the authors is that consequences and the responsibilities for dealing with those consequences form a logical and useful point of departure and organising framework for dealing with disaster preparedness and response. The following figure illustrates the concept, indicating that hazards and the progression of vulnerability combine to create hazard impacts, which in turn, have both predictable and unpredictable consequences. The defined responsibilities of different role-players link them to the observable and known consequences of the impact and require action from them. The fact that responsibility may be denied or contested or not clearly assigned, will remain a complicating factor but is also a fact of life in any management situation that needs continuous attention.

The first article in this series stated the case for the consequence management approach, which is being unpacked in the series of articles. The second article in the series explored the concept of preparedness, which is key to being ready to manage consequences.

In this article the authors will discuss preparedness planning and the hierarchy of preparedness plans that enable jurisdictions to conduct effective consequence management.

As stated in the previous article in this series, which discussed the concept of preparedness, preparedness or contingency planning includes anticipating and planning for a specific occurrence but not yet implementing the plan.

The Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002), as amended, defines emergency preparedness as:

- A state of readiness which enables organs of state and other institutions involved in disaster management, the private sector, communities and individuals to mobilise, organise and provide relief measures to deal with an impending or current disaster or the effects of a disaster and
- The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organisations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions.



Figure 1: Disaster Reaction Model (Carstens and Minnie, 2014)

This definition denotes two elements of preparedness; firstly an enabling state of readiness and secondly effective knowledge and capacity. It follows that if you are planning for preparedness, you will be planning to establish a minimum state of readiness and also to establish sufficient levels of knowledge and capacity. The 'action' or response referenced as the outcome of Figure 1 will thus include implementing the provisions made as part of establishing a minimum state of readiness, as well as deploying the knowledge and skills established through preparedness planning.

An enabling state of readiness

Preparedness planning in a community for an appropriate state of readiness will reflect the extent to which that community is exposed to disaster and will be ready to rapidly deploy resources that covers at least short-term emergency planning, hazard warning and temporary evacuation plus the availability of emergency supplies. An enabling state of readiness will pre-identify actions to be undertaken in the first golden hours or days following the disaster impact. Preparedness planning also considers the process and schedule for identifying and meeting resource and training needs; the process and schedule for developing, conducting and evaluating exercises and correcting identified deficiencies; arrangements for procuring or obtaining required response management resources and plans for facilities and equipment that can withstand the effects of hazards that the jurisdiction is more likely to face.

Preparedness planning should consider corrective actions designed to implement adjustments to resources and/or plans and procedures that are based on lessons

learnt from actual incidents or from training and exercises. Preparedness planning should also consider the post-incident transition from pure response to relief, which addresses actions beyond rapid damage assessment and those necessary to provide immediate life support for victims.

Effective knowledge and capacity

Effective knowledge and capacity for preparedness in a specific location or jurisdiction will also need to be tailored to the context. Emergency response to a sea rescue from a burning oil rig will require different knowledge and capacity than responding to the consequences of drought and food insecurity in an arid region. The preparedness planning activity will build the knowledge required for effective response, as well as the necessary capacity in terms of skills, resources, equipment and facilities. Plans will describe how personnel, equipment and other governmental and nongovernmental resources will be used to support response. Such plans represent the operational core of preparedness and provide mechanisms for setting priorities, integrating multiple entities and functions, establishing collaborative relationships and ensuring that communications and other systems effectively support the complete spectrum of response management activities. The following hierarchy of preparedness plans and procedures have been described in systems such as the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency National Incident Management System (US FEMA NIMS) and others and have also been observed in preparedness planning in various jurisdictions in South Africa.

Jurisdiction preparedness plan (PP)

Each jurisdiction develops a preparedness plan that defines the scope of generic or all-hazard preparedness and incident

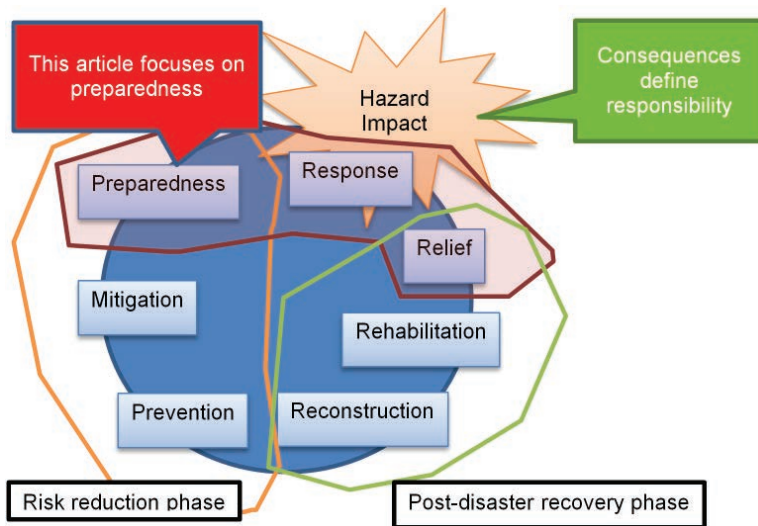


Figure 2: A representation of the much used (and admittedly much criticised) Disaster Management Continuum, indicating the focus of this article

management activities necessary for that jurisdiction. Jurisdictions could be spatial or functional. Examples of jurisdictions include departments, organs of state, municipalities, districts, cities, metros, provinces and countries and also entities with sectoral responsibilities. The exact name of this plan is less important than its content; sometimes such plans are called disaster response plans or just emergency plans or sometimes the preparedness plan is the response element of another higher-level plan that caters for both risk reduction and response, such as a jurisdiction's overall disaster management plan.

The PP should describe organisational structures, roles and responsibilities, policies and protocols for providing emergency support. The PP facilitates response and short-term recovery activities, which set a stage for successful long-term recovery. It should drive decisions on long-term prevention and mitigation efforts or risk-based preparedness measures directed at specific hazards. A PP should be flexible enough for use in all emergencies and therefore all-hazard emergency preparedness and response should form the backbone of a PP, as it indicates how multiple services in a jurisdiction will coordinate their response to major incidents and disasters. A complete PP should describe the purpose of the plan, situation and assumptions, concept of operations, organisation and assignment of responsibilities, administration and logistics, plan development and maintenance and authorities and references. It should also contain response activity descriptions or references to such descriptions and their constituent action steps and procedures, hazard-specific appendices or references to hazard-specific plans and a glossary. PPs should pre-designate jurisdictional and/or functional area representatives for joint response management structures

to facilitate responsive and collaborative response management. PPs should include public awareness, -education and -communications plans and protocols. PPs may also include facility-specific appendices or references that describe emergency response arrangements for specific critical and lifeline facilities or installations as well as installations, which may generate significant off-site impact if they experience emergencies.

As mentioned above, organisations or group/clusters of organisations with responsibilities in terms of the PP should develop procedures that translate the responsibilities of that organisation into specific action-oriented checklists for use during incident management operations, including how the organisation will accomplish its assigned tasks. Some organisations may choose to call their collection of procedures a plan but once again, names are less important than content. Procedures are documented and implemented with checklists; resource listings; maps, charts and other pertinent data; mechanisms for notifying staff; processes for obtaining and using

equipment, supplies and vehicles; methods of obtaining mutual aid; mechanisms for reporting information to organisational command structures or work centres and joint response management structures and communications operating instructions, including connectivity with private-sector and nongovernmental organisations. The development of procedures is required in accordance with legislation for certain risk-based hazard-specific programmes as well as for specific individual facilities and installations in terms of occupational health and safety legislation.

Levels of procedural documents

Four levels of procedural documents have been identified in incident management and emergency response planning literature:

- Overview: a brief concept summary of an incident-related function, team or capability
- Standard operating procedure (SOP) or operations manual: a complete reference document that details the procedure for performing a single function or a number of interdependent functions
- Field operations guide (FOG) or handbook: a durable pocket or desk guide that contains essential information required to perform specific assignments or functions and
- Job aid: a checklist or other aid that is useful in performing or training for a job.

In summary, preparedness planning will establish an enabling state of readiness and effective knowledge and capacity to rapidly respond to any emergency that may be expected by a jurisdiction, whether that jurisdiction is spatial or functional. Preparedness planning reflects responsibility and provides the space for line functions to express their role and functions in a disaster.

This concludes this third article in this series of articles about consequence management. The next article will focus on response management. 🌐

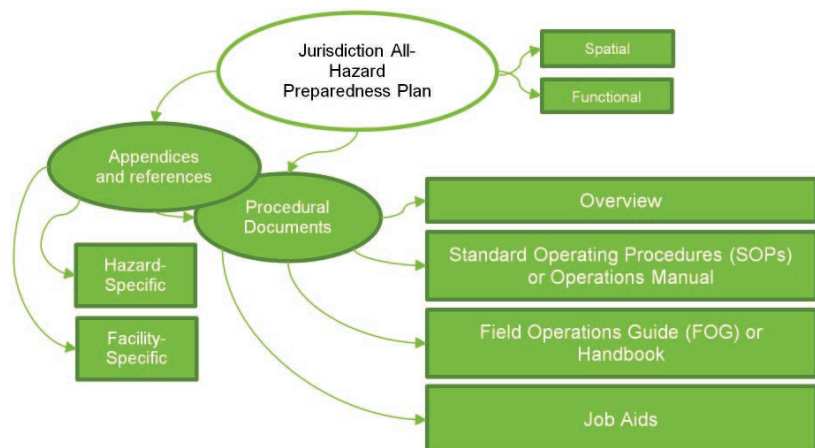


Figure 3: A hierarchy of preparedness plans