

Chapter 1

The Historical Context of Emergency Management

Emergency management is an ancient discipline that deals with risk and risk avoidance. Risk represents a broad range of issues and includes an equally diverse set of players. The range of situations that could possibly involve emergency management or the EM system is extensive. This supports the premise that emergency management is integral to the security of everyone's daily lives and should be integrated into daily decisions and not just called on during times of disaster.

Understanding the history and evolution of emergency management is important because at different times, the concepts of emergency management have been applied differently. Unlike other more structured disciplines, EM has expanded and contracted in response to events, congressional desires, and leadership styles. The following list details the evolution of Emergency management to the present day.

Early History: 1800-1950

The first federal involvement in disaster management appears with an 1803 Congressional act to provide financial assistance to a New Hampshire town. During the 1930s, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Bureau of Public Roads make disaster loans available for public facilities, and the Tennessee Valley authority is created to reduce flooding (in addition to generating electricity). The Flood Control Act of 1934 gave the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authority to design and build flood control projects.

The Cold War and the Rise of Civil Defense: 1950s

The threat of nuclear war and its consequences spurs the creation of Civil Defense programs throughout the country. The Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) is created to support state and local civil defense directors, bringing the concept of emergency management to every community. The Office of Defense Mobilization, which eventually merges with the FCDA, is established to produce, stockpile, and transport emergency supplies and effectively creating emergency preparedness. Congressional response to disasters during this period continue to be ad hoc and primarily involves financial assistance to affected areas.

Natural Disasters Bring Changes to Emergency Management: 1960s

Several major disasters result in significant human and financial losses. Hurricane Betsy, in particular, spurs the passage of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, effectively creating the National Flood Insurance Program and introducing the concept of community-based mitigation. However, the voluntary insurance program was not meeting expectations for the reduction of federal relief expenditures. In 1972, NFIP participation was linked to homeowner loans, and the program's efficacy rises significantly. However, emergency management continues to evolve in a fragmented manner.

The Call for a National Focus to Emergency Management: 1970s

The disaster relief act of 1974 gives HUD the greatest EM authority, though EM functions exist concurrently in several other federal agencies. Under President Carter, with strong state support and following the accident at Three Mile Island, the Federal Emergency Management Agency

was created in 1978. Under FEMA, the majority of federal EM tasks were consolidated. However, FEMA's first years were marked by a resistance to such integration.

Civil Defense Reappears as Nuclear Attack Planning: 1980s

During the Reagan administration, FEMA's top priority was nuclear attack preparedness. Statutory authority steadily moved from the state to the federal level, and funding for state and local programs decreased. The threat of the New Madrid fault leads to the creation of the Federal Response Plan, which later becomes the operating Bible for all federal agencies' response operations.

An Agency in Trouble: 1989-1992

FEMA at the end of the 1980s is an agency suffering from morale problems, disparate leadership, and conflicts with its state and local partners. Inadequate responses to several major disasters called the Agency's existence into question, and the GAO demanded reform. President Clinton, who had response experience during his Arkansas Governorship, recognized FEMA's value and set out early in his term to reinvigorate the agency.

The Witt Revolution: 1993-2001

James Lee Witt, the first FEMA director with prior EM experience, recognized the value of cooperation between federal, state, and local agencies. Witt's sweeping reforms of FEMA restored American's trust in the agency, and created a stronger partnership with the state and local agencies, and with Congress, other federal agencies, and the media. Successful response to an unprecedented series of disasters proved FEMA's worth and helped to eliminate ineffective, antiquated legacy policies. President Clinton affirmed FEMA's value by elevating the position of director into the Cabinet. Witt's term was marked by many important EM initiatives and legislation, including Project Impact, and FEMA was ultimately recognized as the world leader in EM (despite what some analysts see as a failure to secure authority for terrorism response following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing). EM as a profession was evolving such that it became a respected, challenging, and sought-after profession.

Terrorism Becomes Major Focus: 2001

James Allbaugh is presented with an early challenge as FEMA director when, immediately after eliminating funding for the Project Impact program, the Nisqually Earthquake struck and PI is credited for the very low disaster consequences. Project Impact regained its funding, but Allbaugh's next major action was to reinstate the Office of National Preparedness which was created in the 1980's to plan for World War III. While the decision raised concerns, the agency assured that ONP's focus was terrorism response. The need for such a program was validated on the morning of September 11th, when terrorists struck multiple targets in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. The attacks required full activation of the Federal Response Plan, and the strength of the system was proven as hundreds of response personnel initiated operations within minutes of the events.

The Creation of the Department of Homeland Security: 2001-2005

Immediately after the 9/11 attacks, the President created by executive order the Office of Homeland Security. The office had only 120 employees, and a prohibitively small budget. Homeland Security Presidential Directive-3 (HSPD-3) was signed in March of 2002, which

stated that the Nation required a Homeland Security Advisory System to disseminate information regarding terrorism risk. On November 25, 2002, President Bush signed into law the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and named former PA Governor Tom Ridge as secretary of the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that was created as result. The new department joined together over 179,000 federal employees from 22 existing federal agencies under a single, cabinet-level organization. On February 16, 2005, Michael Chertoff was unanimously confirmed by the Senate to succeed Ridge in leading DHS. Soon after, Chertoff announced he would be reorganizing DHS to better manage the organization. As part of the proposed reorganization, virtually all of the remaining preparedness capabilities in FEMA were moved to a new Office of Preparedness, leaving FEMA to focus exclusively on response and recovery, leaving a situation similar to what existed before FEMA's 1979 creation when Federal emergency management and disaster assistance capabilities were scattered across the Federal government and in the White House.

The Hurricane Katrina Debacle 2005

A disaster exercise termed "Hurricane Pam" was convened and completed in July 2004, with appropriate follow up requirements to correct the problems and deficiencies discovered during the exercise recorded (though funding to support these actions was reallocated to support other DHS priorities). The specific danger from Katrina became clear on August 26, when National Hurricane Center and National Weather Service forecasters saw the storm turn west. Warnings to emergency management officials began immediately, and President Bush declared a disaster in advance of the event in the projected impact zone. But however vigorous the preparations, ineffective leadership, poor advance planning, and an unwillingness to devote sufficient resources to emergency management over the long term doomed them to fail when Katrina struck. While Katrina's destructive force could not be denied, state and local officials did not marshal enough of the resources at their disposal. Adding to these shortfalls, years of inadequate funding of federal, state and local emergency functions left them incapable of fully carrying out their missions to protect the public and care for victims. More than 1,800 people died, and tens of thousands were displaced. Failure can be assessed at all levels, but when President Bush signed the Federal declaration of disaster and announced it in the Rose Garden, before Katrina actually made land fall, the Federal government through DHS/FEMA took the primary responsibility for the stewardship of the response to this storm's aftermath. And by any objective evaluation of the response, it was a colossal failure.

The Lead up to the Katrina Debacle

FEMA's Katrina failures were predictable for a number of reasons. First, following September 11, FEMA lost its status as an independent agency and its direct access to the president. Second, FEMA personnel and funds, including money for preparedness and mitigation intended for state and local agencies, were redistributed to support other higher priorities within DHS. Third, the federal response plan was restructured into the National Response Plan to accommodate the new DHS arrangements and the operational oversight role of the department's secretary. A fourth factor was the dramatic post-September 11 change from a focus on "all-hazards" management—in which responders prepare for calamities according to plans that apply regardless of their precise nature—to a focus on terrorism that led to significantly weakened national capabilities. A final factor is the political philosophy of the Administration that emergency management was a State and local issue.

Post Katrina Changes

In the rush to examine and investigate what went wrong, and take corrective actions, the US Congress engaged in extensive hearings and investigations. The Administration's Report, "The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned," was released in February 2006. It was a weighty document, and included 125 recommendations and 11 critical actions that needed to be completed by June 1, the start of the 2006 hurricane season. However, the report, just like the Hurricane Katrina event, reflected the Administration's lack of understanding and lack of accountability for disaster response and recovery. Supported by this and other reports and a public demanding action, the 109th Congress passed revised federal emergency management policies that vested more power in the President; reorganized FEMA; and enhanced and clarified the mission, functions, and authorities of DHS.

The Obama Administration Approach to Emergency Management

Barack Obama's election represented a change from the past, including a change for emergency management. While there had been discussion among staff of the new President about taking FEMA out of DHS, the confirmation of Janet Napolitano who strongly believed FEMA to be an essential part of DHS prevented any such action. Craig Fugate, a former State Director of Emergency Management from Florida, was confirmed as FEMA Administrator, bringing excellent credentials and extensive operational experience to the position. Administrator Fugate stated a desire to create a culture of preparedness as a hallmark of his FEMA tenure, and surrounded himself with a political team that includes several veterans of the 1990's Witt years. Moreover, Administrator Fugate is a strong supporter of rebuilding partnerships with State and local emergency management organizations. Administrator Fugate and his team sought to reenergize the Agency, focusing on the following areas:

- Improving the response operations
- Incorporating all elements of social media – Facebook, twitter, blogs, etc., to communicate with the public before, during and after disasters
- Promoting their signature program concept of a Whole Community approach to emergency management.
- Limiting FEMA's leadership role in Long Term recovery and mitigation

After a slow start in terms of major disasters, Administrator Fugate and his Agency have certainly been tested. Two of the most significant disasters have included the Joplin tornadoes and Hurricane Sandy. By all accounts, FEMA fared well in both Joplin and in the states impacted by Hurricane Sandy - though different areas have seen differing levels of support with New Jersey Governor Chris Christie offering praise and then-presidential candidate Mitt Romney hurling criticism. Many long term recovery issues remain in the states impacted by Sandy, especially New York and New Jersey. President Obama's assignation of HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan to lead the Sandy Recovery, instead of Administrator Fugate or Secretary Napolitano, is a clear indication that FEMA may be shifting away from recovery other than to support it financially through the Disaster Relief Fund. Sandy was also the first large scale use of the new National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), which has resulted in a host of issues that will need to be addressed.

Also of note is that FEMA played virtually no role in the aftermath of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. This is in dramatic contrast to the role FEMA played in the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the Oklahoma City bombing and the 2011 World Trade Center event. By all appearances, leadership at FEMA and DHS are slowly achieving their goal of being a preparedness and response organization, leaving the difficult decisions of recovery and building back better to some other Federal entity. On the other hand, FEMA has made great strides in utilizing social media to for preparedness, response, and recovery communications purposes. The launch of the Strategic Foresight Initiative (SFI), which sought to advance strategic planning for the wider emergency management community, represented another positive effort.

Following Hurricane Sandy, problems with long-term recovery, namely those associated with the National Flood Insurance Program surfaced. These came despite an overall positive critique of Federal response activities. Independent investigations found that thousands of policyholders received less than they were due per the damages they sustained. Public Assistance Program funding was something of an exception in that Administrator Fugate issued a proposed rulemaking that would require repair of damaged facilities to meet current code standards, which would represent an upgrade previously ineligible under the program.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Emergency management is a discipline that deals with which of the following?
 - a. Response and Mitigation
 - b. Preparedness
 - c. Risk and risk avoidance
 - d. *All of the above
2. The constitution tasks which of the following government levels with the responsibility for managing public health and safety?
 - a. County
 - b. Local
 - c. *State
 - d. Federal
3. The first time the federal government became involved in a local disaster following which of the following?
 - a. *A town in New Hampshire was destroyed by a fire in 1803
 - b. St. Louis, Missouri is flooded in 1815
 - c. A series of tornadoes devastates several communities in Oklahoma in the 1830s
 - d. Hurricane Oswald causes severe damage in five Atlantic states in 1877
4. During the 1930s, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Bureau of Public Roads were both given authority to do which of the following?
 - a. Prevent construction that increased slope failures, thereby reducing landslide risks
 - b. *Design and build flood control projects
 - c. Perform annual 'controlled burns' to reduce wildfire risk
 - d. Buyback properties in the floodplain and create 'green spaces'
5. The Civil Defense programs in the 1950s were established primarily to protect American communities from which of the following hazards?
 - a. Technological disasters brought about by increased industrial production
 - b. Rioting and other civil disobedience
 - c. *Nuclear fallout brought on by a Soviet nuclear attack
 - d. Invasion into American soil of a foreign military's troops
6. The primary functions of the Office of Defense Mobilization, which merged with the Federal Civil Defense Administration in 1958, were which of the following?
 - a. *Production, stockpiling, and quick mobilization of critical materials in the event of war
 - b. Mobilization of disaster relief supplies in response to major natural disasters
 - c. Transportation of military troops to disaster sites for response assistance
 - d. All of the above
7. The Hebgen Lake Earthquake, which measured 7.3 on the Richter scale, brought attention to which of the following:
 - a. Earthquake retrofitting in older structures was desperately needed

- b. *The nation's earthquake risk went beyond the California borders
 - c. The federal response to natural disasters would require the use of the military
 - d. Secondary disasters sparked by an initial disaster can have severe consequences
8. Which of the following disasters is credited with starting the discussions that eventually led to the creation of the National Flood Insurance Program?
- a. Hurricane Donna (1960)
 - b. The Ash Wednesday Storm (1962)
 - c. *Hurricane Betsy (1965)
 - d. Hurricane Camille (1969)
9. George Bernstein increased participation in the National Flood Insurance Program by proposing that the purchase of flood insurance was required for which of the following?
- a. *The purchase of homeowner loans backed by federal mortgages
 - b. The purchase of a new home
 - c. Ownership of property in communities where floods had previously occurred
 - d. Zoning of land for agricultural purposes
10. With the passage of the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, which federal agency possessed the most significant authority for natural disaster response and recovery
- a. DOD
 - b. FEMA
 - c. DHS
 - d. *HUD
11. President Carter sought to consolidate emergency preparedness, mitigation, and response activities into one government agency at the federal level. This plan, called Reorganization Plan Number 3, resulted in the creation of which of the following?
- a. Federal Preparedness Agency
 - b. Defense Civil Preparedness Agency
 - c. *Federal Emergency Management Agency
 - d. Federal Disaster Assistance Administration
12. As director of FEMA, John Macy developed which of the following disaster management concepts?
- a. *Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS)
 - b. Comprehensive Emergency Management (CEM)
 - c. Holistic Disaster Management (HDM)
 - d. Multi-Agency Emergency Management (MEM)
13. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate has been explicit about making which of the following a hallmark of his tenure?
- a. Mitigation
 - b. Response
 - c. *Preparedness
 - d. Recovery

14. General Becton is uniformly credited for doing which of the following for FEMA?
- *Restoring integrity to the operations and appropriations of the agency
 - Elevating the position of Director to the Cabinet level
 - Creating stronger partnerships with state and local response agencies
 - All of the above
15. Senator Al Gore illustrated his views that FEMA's priorities were misplaced in regards to the low priority given to natural disasters by citing a report that detailed which of the following threats?
- The increase in property value and industrial production in the nation's floodplains
 - The increase in development along coasts where Hurricanes were prevalent
 - The deteriorating upper atmosphere as indicated by the growing holes in the ozone layer
 - *The potential consequences of the New Madrid fault zone in the central United States
16. Which of the following FEMA directors was the first to have had prior emergency management experience?
- John Macy
 - General Julius Becton
 - *James Lee Witt
 - Louis Giuffrida
17. Which of the following reforms was not performed by Director James Lee Witt?
- Customer service training was introduced
 - *The focus of Emergency Management was shifted from mitigation to response
 - New technologies in Emergency Management were explored
 - The agency was reorganized to break down 'bottlenecks'
18. The Midwest Floods in 1993, which resulted in major disaster declarations in nine states, resulted in which of the following?
- The creation of the National Flood Insurance Program
 - The dissolution of the Tennessee Valley Authority
 - *The initiation of the largest voluntary buyout program to date
 - All of the above
19. Which Federal agency did Administrator Craig Fugate put in charge of the recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy?
- The NDRF
 - DHS
 - *HUD
 - FEMA
20. Which of the following was an important disaster mitigation initiative set forth by Director Witt, which helped communities to become 'disaster resistant'.
- *Project Impact
 - Project Mitigation

- c. The State and Local Disaster Reduction Initiative
- d. Public/Private Resilience Partnership

21. Which of the following legislative changes occurred as a result of the poor response to Hurricane Katrina?

- a. *The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act was passed
- b. The preparedness and mitigation functions were pulled out of FEMA
- c. FEMA was restored to independent status with cabinet representation
- d. None of the above

True or False Questions

1. Following Hurricane Sandy, the National Flood Insurance Program was given acclaim for its effectiveness as a disaster recovery tool.

- a. True b. False*

2. Emergency management is more effective if it is integrated into daily decisions and not just called upon during times of disaster.

- a. True* b. False

3. The federal government responds to disasters when state governments are overwhelmed.

- a. True* b. False

4. The Flood Control Act of 1936 proved that construction in the floodplain results in sustainable community development as long as man exerts control over natural processes (like flooding).

- a. True b. False*

5. The Civil Defense directors of the 1950s ran local programs that were well funded by the federal government.

- a. True b. False*

6. Local and state civil defense directors were the first recognized face of emergency management in the United States.

- a. True* b. False

7. During the Cold War years of the 1950s, there were few major natural disasters.

- a. True* b. False

8. The National Flood Insurance Program was established by the Federal Flood Reduction Act of 1968.

- a. True b. False*

9. The National Flood Insurance Program brought the concept of community-based mitigation into the practice of emergency management.

- a. True* b. False

10. Responsibility for the National Flood Insurance Program was initially given to the federal government.

a. True b. False*

11. In 1974, more than 100 federal agencies were involved in some aspect of risk and disasters.

a. True* b. False

12. Because the fundamental mission of the various agencies integrated into FEMA in its inception were similar, consolidation required less effort than anticipated.

a. True b. False*

13. Janet Napolitano lobbied to remove FEMA from DHS upon her confirmation to the Department, but failed in this attempt.

a. True b. False*

14. During the time that Louis Guiffrida was director of FEMA, the agency's national security responsibilities were elevated.

a. True* b. False

15. The Post-Katrina Act required that DHS reconsolidate all the emergency management functions, including preparedness, into FEMA.

a. True* b. False

16. In late 1992, when Hurricanes Andrew and Iniki struck within months of each other, FEMA performed outstandingly well in responding to the disasters.

a. True b. False*

17. President Clinton was never required to respond to a disaster while Governor of Arkansas, so disaster response was a low-level policy issue during his administration.

a. True b. False*

18. The changes to FEMA made by Director James Lee Witt were not tested until James Allbaugh took control of the agency during the George W. Bush administration.

a. True b. False*

19. The elevation of the FEMA director position to the Cabinet level ultimately weakened the agency.

a. True b. False*

20. In the mid-1990s, following the introduction of the Nunn-Lugar legislation, FEMA failed to claim the role as lead agency for terrorism events.

a. True* b. False

21. FEMA played a lead role in the aftermath of the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing.

a. True b. False*

Essay Questions

1. Describe the evolution of Emergency Management from 1800 to present day.
2. Compare and contrast three FEMA directors.
3. Explain the long- and short-term impacts that Hurricane Katrina had on the practice of emergency management.
4. Describe the creation of the National Flood Insurance Program, and explain a strategy through which subscribership was increased.
5. Explain briefly how FEMA failed to garner lead agency status for the terrorism hazard.