



The Community Partnership  
For The Prevention  
of Homelessness

# A Strengths-based Approach to Disaster Preparedness

March 2008

Washington, DC

Prepared by Canavan Associates

# Focus:

Communication between Emergency Shelter  
Staff and Consumers within the  
DC Continuum of Care (CoC)

# Agenda

- 1) Identification of target population
- 2) Hazard identification
- 3) Communicating w/ Consumers during a disaster
- 4) Disaster preparedness
- 5) Worker health
- 6) Resources

# Target Population

- Approximately 5,800 individuals are experiencing homelessness on any given night in DC.

# Target Population Cont.

- Individuals = 65% of those experiencing homelessness in DC.
- Families = 35% of those experiencing homelessness in DC.

Homeless Enumeration for the Washington Metropolitan Region, 2007, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

# Target Population Cont.

- Of those experiencing homelessness in DC, nearly 1/3 experience chronic homelessness.
  - Chronic Homeless Definition: Unaccompanied adult, disabling condition, 1 year continuously homeless or 4<sup>th</sup> homeless episode in three years.

Homeless Enumeration for the Washington Metropolitan Region, 2007, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

# Target Population Cont.

- Disabling conditions affecting homeless in DC:
  - Chronic SA:.....1,542 or 27%
  - SMI:.....1,362 or 24%
  - Dually Diagnosed:.....762 or 13%
  - HIV/AIDS:.....410 or 7%
  - Physical Disability:.....806 or 14%
  - Chronic Health Prob.....1,305 or 23%

Homeless Enumeration for the Washington Metropolitan Region, 2007, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

## Homeland Security and Emergency Management

## HSEMA HOME

## SERVICES

## INFORMATION

DC Local Emergency

Planning Council

Emergency Plans

Preparedness Guide

Terror Threat Advisory

18 Major Hazards

Homeland Security

Event Calendar

Extreme Weather

Voluntary Organizations

Street Closures

Mt. Pleasant Fire Information

## ONLINE SERVICE

## REQUESTS

## 18 Major Hazards

Hazards are natural or manmade conditions with the potential to cause death, injury or extensive property damage. The District of Columbia is vulnerable to a variety of hazards, both natural and manmade. In 1995, the city conducted a hazard analysis that identified 14 major hazards based on historical data, frequency of occurrence, damage statistics and the city's overall vulnerability. Since that initial assessment the list of hazards has been revised and updated several times. Currently, there are 18 major hazards affecting the District of Columbia, including:

- [Thunderstorms](#)
- [Winter Storms](#)
  - [Snow](#)
- [Transportation Accidents](#)
- [Special Events, Demonstrations and Civil Disruptions](#)
- [Urban Floods](#)
  - [Flood Factsheet\\*](#)
  - [Flood Factsheet: Proper Use of Sandbags\\*](#)
  - [Flood Factsheet: Protection of HVAC Equipment\\*](#)
- [Utility Failures](#)
  - [Electricity Shortages](#)
- [Hurricanes](#)
  - [Hurricane Factsheet\\*](#)
- [Radiological and Hazardous Materials](#)
- [Urban Fires](#)
- [Terrorism](#)
- [Extreme Weather](#)
  - [Heat](#)
  - [Cold](#)
- [Explosions \(Manhole Covers\)](#)
- [Critical Resource Shortages](#)
- [Human Viruses and Epidemics](#)
- [Earthquakes](#)
- [Tornadoes](#)
- [Prison Problems](#)
- [Urban Crime](#)

\* This document is presented in Portable Document Format (PDF). A PDF reader is required for viewing.

[Download a PDF Reader](#) or [Learn More About PDFs](#).

# 18 Major Hazards

- Hazards are natural or manmade conditions with the potential to cause death, injury or extensive property damage.
- The District of Columbia is vulnerable to a variety of hazards, both natural and manmade.

<http://dcema.dc.gov/dcema/cwp/view,a,1226,q,533340,dcemaNav,%7C3180%7C.asp>

# Hazards Cont.

- In 1995, the city conducted a hazard analysis that identified 14 major hazards based on historical data, frequency of occurrence, damage statistics and the city's overall vulnerability.
- Since the initial assessment the list has increased to 18.

<http://dcema.dc.gov/dcema/cwp/view,a,1226,q,533340,dcemaNav,%7C3180%7C.asp>

# Hazards Cont.

- [Thunderstorms](#)
- [Winter Storms](#)
- Transportation Accidents
- Special Events, Demonstrations and Civil Disruptions
- [Urban Floods](#)
- Utility Failures
- Hurricanes
- Radiological and Hazardous Materials
- [Urban Fires](#)
- Terrorism

<http://dcema.dc.gov/dcema/cwp/view,a,1226,q,533340,dcemaNav,%7C3180%7C.asp>

# Hazards Cont.

- Extreme Weather
- Explosions (Manhole Covers)
- Critical Resource Shortages
- Human Viruses and Epidemics
- [Earthquakes](#)
- [Tornadoes](#)
- Prison Problems
- Urban Crime

<http://dcema.dc.gov/dcema/cwp/view,a,1226,q,533340,dcemaNav,%7C3180%7C.asp>

# 39 Neighborhood-Specific Plans

[District of Columbia](#)   [MAYOR FENTY](#)   [DC GUIDE](#)   [RESIDENTS](#)   [BUSINESS](#)   [VISITORS](#)   [GOVERNMENT](#)   [FOR KIDS](#)

## Homeland Security and Emergency Management

**HSEMA HOME**

**SERVICES**

**INFORMATION**  
[DC Local Emergency Planning Council](#)  
[Emergency Plans](#)  
[Preparedness Guides](#)  
[Terror Threat Advisory](#)  
[18 Major Hazards](#)  
[Homeland Security](#)  
[Event Calendar](#)  
[Extreme Weather](#)  
[Voluntary Organizations](#)  
[Street Closures](#)  
[Mt. Pleasant Fire Information](#)

**ONLINE SERVICE REQUESTS**

### Community Emergency Management Plans

With input from DC residents, the DC Emergency Management Agency (DCEMA) drafted plans to help DC communities prepare for and respond to all types of emergencies. There are 39 Community Emergency Preparedness Plans for neighborhood clusters throughout the District of Columbia. Select from the links below to view the Community Emergency Preparedness Plans for each neighborhood cluster.

#### Community Emergency Management Plans

Clusters	Neighborhoods*
1	<a href="#">Kalamita Heights, Adams Morgan, Lanier Heights*</a>
2	<a href="#">Columbia Heights, Mt. Pleasant, Pleasant Plains, Park View*</a>
3	<a href="#">Howard University, Le Droit Park, Cardozo/Shaw*</a>
4	<a href="#">Georgetown, Bursleth/Hilandale*</a>
5	<a href="#">West End, Foggy Bottom, GWU*</a>
6	<a href="#">Dupont Circle, Connecticut Avenue/K Street*</a>
7	<a href="#">Shaw, Logan Circle*</a>
8	<a href="#">Downtown, Chinatown, Penn Quarters, Mount Vernon Square, North Capitol Street*</a>
9	<a href="#">Southwest Employment Area, Southwest/Waterfront, Fort McNair, Buzzard Point*</a>
10	<a href="#">Chevy Chase, Hawthorne, Barnaby Woods*</a>

Page 1 of 4   [↔](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [↔](#)

\* This document is presented in Portable Document Format (PDF) and a PDF reader is required for viewing. [Download a PDF reader](#) or [learn more](#) about PDFs.

[Telephone Directory by Topic](#) • [Agencies](#) • [DC Council](#) • [Search](#) • [Elected Officials](#) • [Feedback](#) • [Translations](#) • [Accessibility](#) • [Privacy & Security](#) • [Terms & Conditions](#)

# Neighborhood-Specific Plans Cont.

- Provide neighborhood-level stats
- Identify neighborhood-level hazards
- Provide neighborhood-level information on:
  - Recreation centers & schools
  - Police, fire, and EMS stations
  - Medical care facilities
  - Heating & cooling centers/resources during extreme weather
  - Tips on being prepared
  - Ward Days (community events for citizens to learn about disaster preparedness)

# Which cluster is your shelter in?

- Mount Pleasant, Columbia Heights, Pleasant Plains, & Park View Example

<http://dcema.dc.gov/dcema/frames.asp?doc=/dcema/lib/dcema/Cluster 2 Updated.pdf>

# Consumer Needs in a Disaster

- Safety
- Food, water, possibly shelter
- Continued access to RX medication:
  - Drug dependence therapies
  - Psychiatric medication
  - Antiretrovirals
  - Insulin, blood pressure...
  - Directly observed therapy (TB)
- Coping skills
- Information
- Support
- Help making informed decisions
- Alt. routes out of bldg./evacuation/transportation

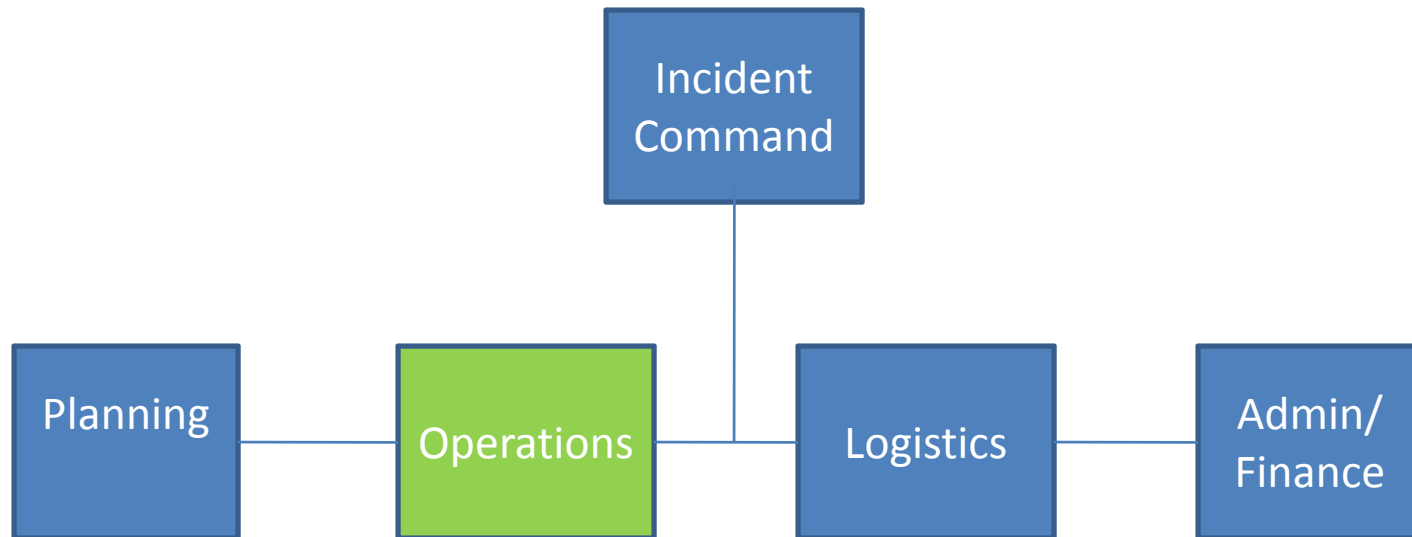
# Strengths

- During the training, be thinking of strengths, resources, and skills that some consumers you have worked with could bring to aid in a disaster response.

# Existing Provider Strengths Applied in a Disaster Situation

- Masters of improvisation
- Knowledge of where people are
- Mutual familiarity
- Knowledge of human behavior, SA, SMI
- Active listening and crisis intervention skills
- Mass care via shelter & food provision
- Crowd control & safety

# (Homeless) Emergency Shelter Work During a Disaster



# Risk Acceptability

- Voluntary vs. imposed
- Under an individuals control vs. controlled by others
- Have clear benefits vs. little or no perceived benefits
- Be distributed fairly vs. unfairly distributed
- Natural vs. manmade
- Generated by a trusted source vs. untrusted source
- Familiar vs. exotic
- Affect adults vs. children

Communicating in a Crisis: Risk Communication Guidelines for Public Officials, 2002, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

# SOP



- Be aware of program and/or agency Disaster Preparedness protocols
  - Work with supervisor/management to ensure your role is clear
  - Review plan (bi-annually or during heightened risk)
  - At time of disaster, do quick review of plan as necessary

# Communication During a Disaster

- Be aware of risk communication myths:
  - Myth: Risk communication is more likely to harm than calm.
  - Myth: Many issues that arise in times of crisis are too difficult for the public to understand.

Communicating in a Crisis: Risk Communication Guidelines for Public Officials, 2002, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

# Communication During a Disaster Cont.

- Size-up the situation, be informed, & be prepared:
  - Follow program/organization Emergency Protocols
  - Gather data & synthesize data into concise & easy to understand information
  - Anticipate questions
  - Be confident in main message

# Communication During a Disaster Cont.

- Apply existing core strengths & safety precautions:
  - Calm approach, build rapport, listen, & provide information
  - 1<sup>st</sup> entrance out, ensure nearby or back-up staff, take two-way radio or mobile phone, if personal protective equipment needed remember to take.

# Communication During a Disaster Cont.

- Active listening
  - Allow silence
  - Non-verbal listening of eye contact, head nodding, caring facial expressions, occasional “uh-huhs”
  - Paraphrase (i.e. so you are saying that)
  - Reflect feelings (i.e. you sound angry, does that fit for you?)
  - Allow emotional expression: Intense emotions expressed through tears or angry venting can help one work through feelings to pave way toward constructive problem solving.

# Communication

## During a Disaster Cont.

- Help Consumers understand the following:
  - No one who sees a disaster is untouched by it
  - It's normal to feel anxious about you and your family (friend) safety
  - Sadness, grief, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event
  - Acknowledging our feelings helps us recover
  - Focusing on strengths and abilities can help heal
  - Accepting help from community programs and resources is healthy
  - We all have different needs and coping mechanisms
  - It is common to want to strike back at people who have caused great pain, but nothing good is accomplished by hateful language or acts.

Care Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event: What to Expect in Your Personal, Family, Work, and Financial Life, SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center,

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/KEN-01-0097/default.asp>

# Communication

## During a Disaster Cont.

- Provide tips to Consumers to help them cope w/ Disaster induced stress:
  - Talk w/ someone about feelings
  - Do not hold self responsible for event
  - Do not be frustrated if you cannot help directly in the rescue effort
  - Take steps to promote physical and emotional healing by maintaining routines
  - Use existing support groups
  - If help strategies aren't working and/or using AOD to cope, may wish to seek outside or professional assistance.

Care Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event: What to Expect in Your Personal, Family, Work, and Financial Life, SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center,

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/KEN-01-0097/default.asp>

# Communication

## During a Disaster Cont.

- Addressing fears w/ information:
  - Metro:
    - All Metro Transit Police, rail supervisors, station managers, and operators should be trained in First Aid and CPR.
    - Each rail car has three sets of emergency doors and fire protection systems.
    - If in a tunnel or elevated track during an evacuation of the metro, use the Emergency Trip Station Call Box (marked w/ a blue light & available every 800 feet) and dial zero for the Metro.
    - The metro is designed to reduce smoke and provide emergency lighting if needed.

# Communication

## During a Disaster Cont.

- Have the most up-to-date information on available resources:
  - Food, shelters, Rx assistance, hotlines or 2-1-1, risks, detox, counseling, decontamination sites, and evacuations and transportation.

# Administrative Tasks

- Notify program or agency Disaster Liaison of questions unable to answer.
- Document client interactions in HMIS
- Identify next steps
- Identify steps to build into next development of program, agency, and CoC Disaster Response Plan

# SOP



- Be aware of program and/or agency Disaster Preparedness protocols
  - Ensure outreach part of formal plan and know component
  - Review plan
  - At time of disaster, do quick review of plan as necessary

# Disaster Preparedness

- Talk w/ Consumers about different possible events, possible associated activities, and being prepared:
  - Emergency Information form (& utility of this in non-disaster times)
  - Being prepared physically and mentally/emotionally

# Disaster Preparedness Cont.

- Preparing Consumers emotionally/mentally for a disaster:
  - Different emotions one may experience (during a disaster) and reactions they think they may have
  - Tips on concise and effective communication during a disaster

# Disaster Preparedness Cont.

- Emergency kit/pack:
  - Emergency Information Form, ID, social security card, shelter card, medical card, list of medications and allergies, medications (7 day supply), DD214 or other VA paperwork, phone card, water, metro/bus tokens, & flashlight, radio, and battery.
    - Those with children: Add birth certificates, vaccination records, & diapers.

# Provider Strengths

- What are some crisis scenarios that Emergency Shelter Staff have successfully responded to in the past that can be applied toward the future in disaster situations?

# Worker Health During a Disaster (preventing burn-out)

- Dealing w/ the dual role: Worker's may also be experiencing impact(s) of disaster
- Acknowledging high stress a first step in managing it:
  - Routine defusing and debriefing sessions during all phases of recovery operations
  - ID a stress management counselor
  - Be aware of signs and symptoms of burnout in Consumers and Staff

# SAMSHA

- On-line publications available on disaster and trauma:
    - After a Disaster: Self Care Tips for Dealing w/ Stress
    - Communicating in a Crisis: Risk Communication Guidelines for Public Officials
    - Disaster Counseling
    - Psychosocial Issues for Older Adults in Disasters
- [http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/Publications\\_browse.asp?ID=181&Topic=Disaster%2FTrauma](http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/Publications_browse.asp?ID=181&Topic=Disaster%2FTrauma)

# Washington DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency

- DC Local Emergency Planning Council
  - Alert DC Notification System
    - Emergency Plans
    - Preparedness Guides
  - Terror Threat Advisory
    - Major Hazards

<http://dcema.dc.gov/dcema/site/default.asp?dcemaNav=|31806|>

# Alert DC

- When an incident or emergency occurs, DC Homeland Security & Emergency Management personnel can provide a personal connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do, or what not to do, who to contact and other important information.
- Alert DC is available to citizens of the DC and those traveling to or working in the District.
- Subscribers may be charged, as set forth in wireless provider contracts, for messages delivered to wireless devices.

<https://textalert.ema.dc.gov/index.php?CCheck=1>

# National Response Framework

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/>