COORDINATION IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Role of an Emergency Operating Center

In a major emergency, numerous agencies--Federal, State, and non-government--must carry out the many different functions needed in an emergency swiftly and well. Many of these functions, as we have seen, are interdependent; one agency cannot do its job well without information from another agency it cannot directly "control."

The larger the number of responding agencies, the greater the resources, skills, data, and potential confusion. These resources must be integrated and applied thoughtfully within a structure. That means across-the-board cooperation and information sharing. How can this be done efficiently when each agency and individual has so much to do just to get its task done--without having to tell scores of other agencies what it is doing and what it knows about the situation!

One proven way to improve coordination in a major emergency is by centralizing communications in an emergency operating center, or EOC.

An emergency operating center (EOC) is defined differently by various individuals and/or jurisdictions, due, in part, to the experiences of the individuals, threats to their jurisdictions, and other factors. In some jurisdictions, the EOC will be an extremely sophisticated facility, designed and built specifically for that purpose. In others, the EOC may be a converted conference room. In still others, no EOC exists.

In general, the major functions performed by the emergency management staff in the EOC include

- Direction and control,
- Information collection, evaluation, and display,
- Coordination,
- Establishment of priorities, and
- Resource management.

Why does a jurisdiction need an EOC? What are the advantages of having a special location for conducting disaster operations? There is, no doubt, some inconvenience to members of an emergency team when they have to move to a relatively strange and unfamiliar location to conduct emergency operations. Certainly, the staff would be more comfortable in familiar surroundings with all their people "right there." Why not just stay in the day-to-day location to do the job?

Some advantages of assembling the jurisdictional emergency staff into a single location--the EOC--are listed below.

- *Centralized direction and control*--A single point where all information is received and analyzed, decisions are made, priorities are established, and resources are allocated.

- *Single point for collection, evaluation, display, and dissemination of information*--From information gathered here, the entire situation can be reviewed and evaluated. Here the two key questions raised by an emergency can best be answered: "What has happened?" and "What is about to happen?" Agencies report different "pieces of the puzzle" that represent the total situation to the EOC so that a more complete picture can be assembled. The situation throughout the jurisdiction can be analyzed and response actions developed based on factual, coordinated data.

- *Verification of information*--Rumors create problems. Until information can be verified (or communicated by an unimpeachable source), caution must be exercised. Sometimes there is a fine line between rumor and fact that must be resolved. The EOC staff provides resources and capabilities to validate information, either by information from more than one source or by verification of data by field units.

- *Repository of data*--Unlike the situation that exists on a day-to-day basis, all parties involved in disaster operations must have immediate access to all information as quickly as possible. What transpires in one disaster response area may have a significant effect on a number of disaster staff elements, even requiring a complete reversal of planned actions.

- *Immediate availability of information*--Information on what *has* happened, what is *about* to happen, and what is *expected* to happen are all right there in the EOC.

- *Ready reference to current situation*--The EOC provides a single location where the current status of a disaster situation is readily available and prominently displayed. This aids up-to-the-minute analysis of the situation, review of past actions or events, and development of possible courses of action to mitigate further destructive effects and to execute response and recovery activity.

- *Maximum use of available communications*--In any disaster situation, communication is the key to adequate response. The EOC must contain information vital to adequate response to emergencies. Operating from a central location, the EOC makes maximum use of available information and provides a means of communication with the emergency staff on a day-to-day basis.

- *Facilitation of coordination*--A properly staffed EOC facilitates coordination among responding departments in the affected jurisdiction, staff elements of the emergency organization, responding agencies, and even jurisdictions. Each agency, department, jurisdiction, and element of the private sector with an actual or potential response mission or capability must be able to coordinate activities with other participating agencies. This can be accomplished effectively only if representatives are collocated or able to make contact with one another on a regular basis.

- *Single point of contact*--The EOC provides a single point of contact for outside support (mutual aid) agencies, affected jurisdictions or communities, and State and Federal agencies. Coordination among agencies is difficult even under ideal conditions. Imagine the problem of coordination under situations of disrupted communications, for example.

- *Facilitation of operation over prolonged period*--Disasters and emergencies do not operate on an eight-hour day or a five-day week. They often strike at the most inopportune times and frequently last for days, weeks, or even months. The EOC allows the response operation to proceed in a systematic, coordinated manner, and, if appropriate, allows those elements of the jurisdiction not actively engaged in the disaster operations to return to "business as usual."

- *Provision for continuity and facilitation of shift change*--Operating in a central location makes it easier to arrange operation shifts, and promotes continuity of response and close coordination among operating elements. The EOC may operate 24 hours a day for weeks. Only through coordinated operations in a central facility can responsive and continuous operations be ensured.

- *Provision for identification and use of available resources*--Operating from an EOC, where all elements of the emergency staff are aware of problems at hand, facilitates determination of logistic requirements and helps to identify sources and aids in the acquisition of logistical support. Frequently, one service element of the emergency organization may be in need of a particular resource (whether it be personnel, equipment, or supplies) only to find that another service element has the resource or is aware of a potential source.

- *Provision for a facility to conduct meetings and training*--A properly designed EOC not only provides a facility with operating space for the emergency

services elements of a jurisdiction, but also provides a centralized location to conduct meetings, strategy sessions, and training.

- *Provision for facility day-to-day operations*--An established EOC can and should be the day-to-day operating location of the emergency management element of the jurisdiction. This permits establishment of an operation element recognized by the entire staff as the central focal point for all disaster responses.

Emergency management staff required to operate the EOC effectively during a disaster situation will depend on several factors:

- Size of the jurisdiction;
- Size of the day-to-day jurisdictional staff;
- Nature of the disaster;
- Percentage of the jurisdiction (population and area) involved in the disaster; and
- Size of the facility selected for use as the EOC.

The EOC staff will expand and contract during various phases of the disaster, with the largest commitment of personnel during the response phase.

Emergency service disciplines that must be represented in the EOC are many and varied. In addition, numerous administrative and support elements must be present in the EOC to provide direct support to elements of staff responsible for response and recovery functions.

Incident Command System (ICS)

Many of you already may have a functional awareness of the Incident Command System (ICS) as an element in life saving and property protection during disasters and emergencies. If so, the following discussion will be a review that also covers your various roles and responsibilities in relation to the ICS.

The ICS is a system for the pre-planned, organized conduct of response activity at the scene of a disaster. It has a long history of success in use from the earliest days of organized warfare and in the national and State forest service and has been adopted across discipline boundaries.

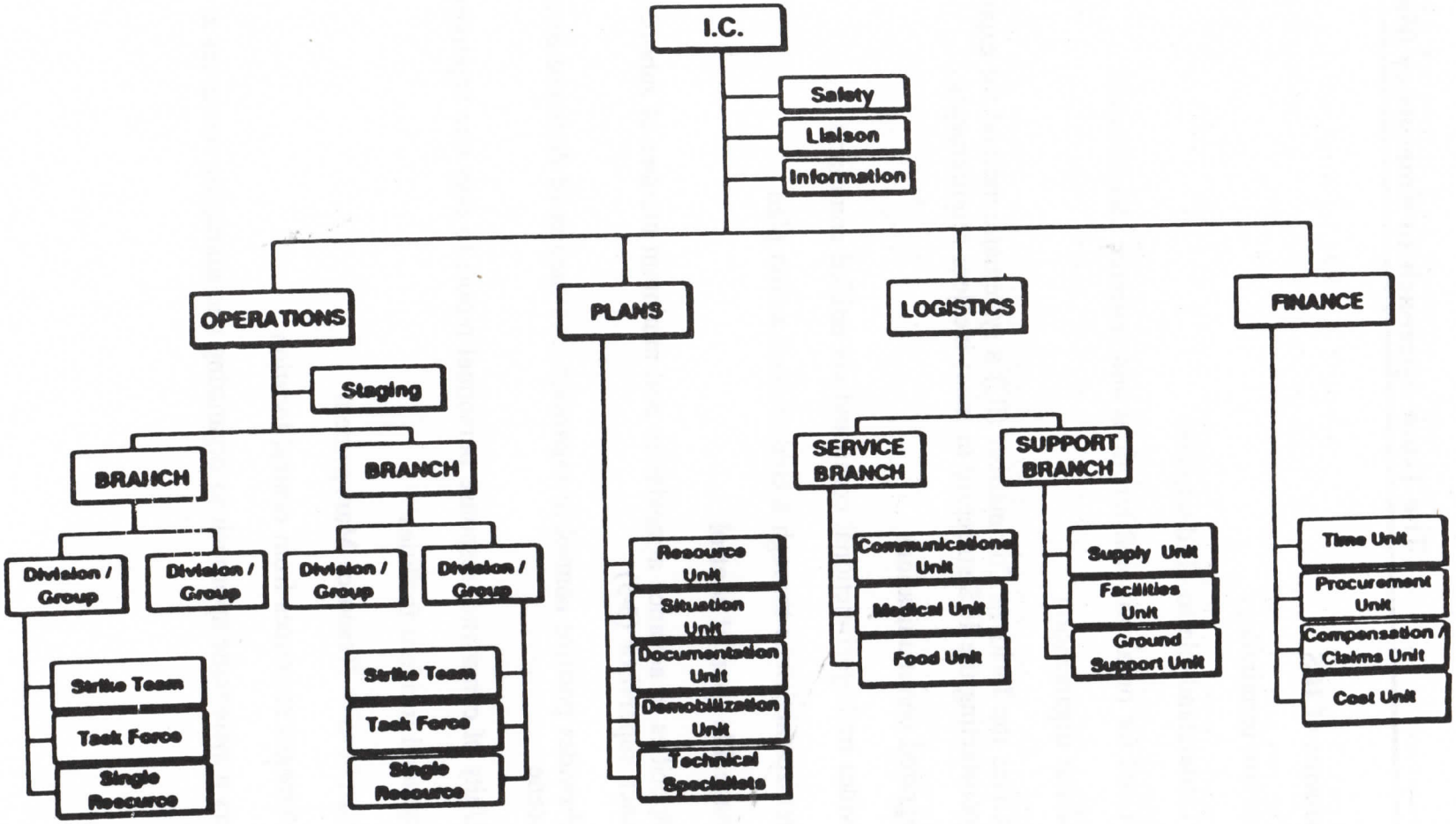
In use, the ICS may expand from a team of one to a size involving several hundreds of people and organizations, and many disciplines and political jurisdictions. (The chart on

p. III-37 shows the complete model ICS adopted by FEMA's National Fire Academy.) Most emergencies require staffing all these positions. It involves and requires advance interdisciplinary planning and coordination. The ICS identifies

1. Specific functions to be performed at the scene of an incident,
2. Relationships among responders at the scene, and
3. Terminology, operating concepts, and an adaptable organizational structure.

The ICS forces deployed at the scene are supported by others not at the scene; when this support requirement becomes complex, activation of the community EOC is appropriate. The EOC manager should be kept informed of incidents that have the potential for escalation to disaster proportions so that EOC activation can be accomplished in a timely manner and to the degree required.

NFA MODEL INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM



Basic components of ICS

- Common terminology
  - Understandable to all disciplines
  - Used for organizational functions and resource identification
- Modular organization
  - Gives the Incident Commander (IC) a systematic method for expanding and contracting the ICS structure to meet incident requirements
- Integrated communications
- Provides multi-jurisdictional command via unified command
- Organizes activities through a consolidated action plan
- Manageable span of control
  - Specifies in advance a maximum and minimum number of subordinates for each supervisor (3-5)
  - Provides positive control in expansion/contraction of deployed forces to scene
  - Unity of command--response personnel report to only one supervisor
- Designated incident facilities
- Comprehensive Resource Management
  - Manages resources from central location

The ICS offers a systematic approach to organizing and managing resources at the scene of a disaster.

Adoption of ICS for emergency response is handled differently within each community or State, depending on

- State laws,
- Local ordinances,
- Department standard operating procedures,
- Emergency Operating Plans, and
- Informal agreements among all emergency management agencies.

The ICS is a proven and integral element of integrated emergency management. ICS offers a systematic approach to organizing and managing resources at the scene of an emergency incident.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT

THE INEVITABILITY OF CONFLICT

In any group, conflict is inevitable because people have varying perspectives and experience. The problems arise when someone denies the legitimacy of the other's perspective, or when there is no attempt to consolidate and use what each individual knows and sees as part of the solution.

For example, representatives of the chief executive's office and the building inspector's office have different jobs. A representative of the chief executive looks at the "big picture," which means accounting for the political side effects of decisions made and actions taken. The building inspector, on the other hand, wants to enforce codes and regulations--to the letter and without undue concern for potential political implications. A natural conflict could easily arise in this context, and the integrated emergency management system must find ways to handle conflicts of this nature productively.

Since conflict is natural, the goal of managers in emergency management, as in other groups, is not to eliminate conflict but rather to view it as essentially healthy if it is handled and resolved constructively. The emergency management team is enhanced by exploring differences because new ideas and new learning result. Usually, when conflict arises and is dealt with openly, people are stimulated to creativity, alternatives are considered, better ideas come forth, and a better course of action results.

NOTES

PAIRED ACTIVITY: HANDLING CONFLICT

Following are a series of questions applicable to conflict issues. The questions are deliberately open-ended and intended to promote creative thinking and discussion.

To complete this activity, you will be paired with another class member. You are to take turns responding to each question or statement. Allow a few minutes for each response, and then move on to the next question or statement.

Use the space provided to jot down notes for yourself about your response and the discussion you have with your partner.

You will have 20 minutes to work with your partner. Your instructor will call time. Then, you will have an opportunity to share some of your answers with the class.

1. Conflict is...

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. One of the distinguishing characteristics of conflict is that it usually has a *feeling* side as well as a *content* side. Sometimes the emotions generated in a conflict actually become more important than the issue that caused the conflict in the first place. The feelings we experience during and after conflict situations often influence the way we handle conflict. How would you describe your feelings during conflict situations? Are there "trigger" conditions that make these feelings more intense?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Assuming that conflict will be present as naturally in the emergency management arena as it is elsewhere, what good would you expect to come from it in this context?

4. In conflict situations, one or more people or groups are likely to have more power and possess greater authority than others. For example, the chief executive officer of the jurisdiction is likely to have more power and authority than someone working in an operational program in that locality. When you are in a situation in which *you* have more power than others who are involved, how are you inclined to handle situations in which others disagree with you?

5. When a person for whom you work (as an employee, committee, or task force member, for example) makes a decision or takes a course of action that in your opinion is ill-advised, unreasonable, or wrong, how do you handle the situation?

6. Individuals in emergency management frequently view issues and roles differently. When you find yourself disagreeing with others in your system on an issue of importance to the team, how do you handle it?

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7. When you are working as a member of an emergency management team and a single member of the team refuses to "buy into" a decision or point of view accepted by the rest of the group, how do you try to solve the problem?

_____

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8. When you see a conflict brewing or a problem arising in a group, what actions do you normally take?

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9. In emergency management, a great deal of activity involves cooperation among a number of groups that have a hand in implementing coordinated services. The greater the number of groups involved, the greater the potential for disagreement and conflict. How would you be inclined to handle conflict between your group and another with which you must work as a member of a comprehensive emergency management team?

10. Frequently a "turf" war among groups results in a deadlock with neither side able to accept the position of the other. In your opinion (based on your experience), what are the reasons for a group or organization failing to resolve conflicts with other groups through discussion and collaboration?

11. Identify your most prominent strengths in dealing with conflict, and demonstrate how these strengths might contribute to a more successful emergency program in your jurisdiction.

VIDEOTAPE PRESENTATION: RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Conflicts confront managers and supervisors daily, yet when called in as a third party in a conflict, managers may be unsure about what to do. The true-to-life vignettes in the videotape presentation *Resolving Conflicts* illustrate several conflict resolution strategies: avoidance, giving the conflict back to those involved, imposing a solution, compromise, and collaboration. While each is a valid strategy by itself, the key is to select the most appropriate strategy for the particular situation.

CARING: THE CORE OF CONFLICT

Conflict would not occur if two or more parties did not *care* about something--something they feel they cannot *get* or something they feel they cannot *give*. The simplest way to reduce conflict is to stop caring. But many times, especially in organizations, we are in situations where we must get from, and give to, those around us. One key skill for conflict resolution is to figure out what the parties in conflict really care about, and what all parties involved care about, as a starting point for resolution. With your partner, answer questions one and two. Then discuss a conflict you know of (preferably one in an emergency management context) with your partner. If time allows, each of you should have the opportunity to briefly discuss a sample conflict.

1. In the film, what did each of the following care about as individuals that led to their conflict?

   The tennis pros

   Jay cared about _____

   Howard cared about _____

   The publishing company department heads

   Sam cared about _____

   Jeri cared about _____

   The tenants in the apartment complex

   The "loud music" player cared about _____

   The other tenant cared about _____

2. In the film, what do you think these people *both* cared about?

The tennis pros, Jay and Howard

_____

_____

Sam and Jeri at the publishing company

_____

_____

The two tenants in the apartment

_____

_____

3. APPLICATION TO YOUR WORLD

RECALL a conflict situation you confronted.

REFLECT--what do you believe the two parties cared about?

Party A

_____

_____

Party B

_____

_____

What is something they *both* cared about?

_____

_____

ASSESS--how could that have been used as a starting point for conflict resolution?

_____

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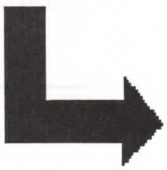
_____

WAYS OF HANDLING CONFLICT

Conflict itself is neither good nor bad--it just is. From the simplest forms of life to the most complex, differences appear to be built in as a necessary part of the fabric of life. As crucial as these differences are for providing new ideas and creating new possibilities, the differences (or conflict) can also lead to friction, threat, and negative outcomes. The key is how we understand and respond to the conflict situation.

Conflict is based on *caring*. Each of the parties involved in the difficulty desires something. Usually those involved are frustrated because they believe they need, or cannot *give*, something they believe they should be able to give. It is also necessary that the two be locked into some kind of interdependent relationship, where what one does affects the other.

Avoidance



This approach is simply to ignore the conflict or at least not put any attention into trying to do anything about it. In certain situations where the conflict is a trivial one, this might be appropriate. Where you are avoiding a conflict that involves others and you believe the parties are capable of resolving it themselves, this is quite a legitimate alternative. It has the *benefits* of increasing their feeling of responsibility and possibly their skills in resolving conflict, but carries the *risk* of the conflict not being resolved successfully within the desired timeframe, or even mushrooming so that it becomes a much larger issue that will take more skill and more time to resolve.

Giving It Back to Those Involved

This alternative differs from avoidance in that the parties involved are charged with determining a solution within a certain timeframe. This has the *benefits* of building the skills of the subordinates and the additional payoff of keeping the manager more actively involved in the conflict than he or she was while avoiding. Some of the *risks* are that the people involved may not be able to resolve the conflict. (If they could have, they might not be in the situation in the first place!) There are, however, many instances where the risks are slight and where those involved are competent to resolve it; in these circumstances giving it back is the most appropriate strategy. However, it is important to monitor the situation and not *assume* it has been successfully resolved.

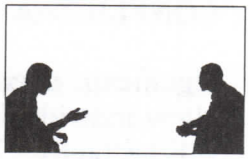
Imposing a Solution

In this alternative the manager listens to both parties and unilaterally decides on a solution, announces it to those involved, and makes sure they understand which solution has been chosen. This is an extremely effective strategy when a) time is short, b) when the manager determines that the two employees or groups should not decide the issue between themselves, or c) when the emergency program manager clearly knows what solution he or she wants. This may have to be used in disaster situations.

Compromise

In a compromise approach all parties think over their side of the issue and their critical needs, and then identify and accept the minimum they can live with to resolve the conflict. The primary goal is stopping the conflict, rather than a thorough working out of the issues in order to keep something like this from happening again. On the *positive* side, compromise can quickly resolve some conflicts without the expenditure of a lot of time or energy; for many types of conflict situations, it is the most appropriate strategy. On the *risk* side, however, compromise may stop this conflict situation but leave the door open for similar or even larger manifestations of the *basic conflict*, which has still not been discovered or resolved.

Collaboration



Here each side works hard stating their concerns, their goals, and their needs in the conflict situation, and then listens to the other party do the same, in an attempt to work through the conflict to a genuinely satisfactory outcome. In collaboration everyone involved wants to get to the root causes and the most basic issues precipitating the conflict so that an understanding can be arrived at by the two parties. By identifying concerns which each party needs to have addressed, the basis for a mutually satisfying solution can be constructed. Frequently, creative solutions are found that address the concerns of *both* parties. (This is less likely to occur when each side comes in with a hard "position" stating exactly what should be done to resolve the conflict.) The *benefits* of this are fairly obvious: the roots of conflict are usually identified and addressed; both parties usually have a high investment and commitment to the solution developed by some of the other alternative strategies. On the *minus side*, however, collaboration requires a great deal from those involved. Specifically, collaboration is based on the following:

- Awareness and acknowledgement by both parties that the conflict exists;
- Equal amounts of courage and willingness to take risks while discussing the situation;

- Balanced communications skills between the two parties;
- Commitment to both the relationship and to discovering a solution;
- Willingness to take enough time to do it right; and
- A commitment to an overriding common goal, concern, or need.

NOTES

CONFLICT--A POSITIVE FORCE

Significant decisions reached through an inadequate process of discussion that does not allow individuals to voice disagreements and to engage in significant conflict of ideas will be faulty. The Bay of Pigs invasion and the Watergate coverup were both results of decisionmaking processes that did not tolerate dissent or disagreement and which ultimately led to failure. If conflict can be stifled so easily at the national policy level, it is even more likely to be suppressed among other groups of decisionmakers at lower levels.

Dictionary definitions of conflict include the following: "disagreement... war, battle, collision, emotional tension...the opposition of persons...." The connotation here clearly is negative and does not account for the constructive and positive results that can be derived when conflict is handled effectively. Learning how to disagree productively is a critical skill for people in an integrated emergency management system.

For managers and others in the emergency network, reaching consensus on a solution to a shared problem is a major goal. Before a group can achieve consensus, however, the views of all members of the emergency management team should be heard and given fair consideration and critical evaluation. Conflict or disagreement is an innate and

essential part of this process, and occurs naturally when people *care* about an issue--as those on an emergency management team surely care about public safety and carrying out their own role as well as to protect the community. The very fact that the emergency management team is comprised of experts from throughout the organization makes different viewpoints regarding the "best" way to respond to a crisis or plan a program an inevitable part of the emergency management process.

It is important, then, for the emergency management team to build an atmosphere that is conducive to the expression of differing opinions, to rigorous scouting of evidence and implications, and to the thorough consideration of all possible alternative courses of action. An integrated emergency management system will encourage activities and processes that allow for disagreement in order to increase the chances of making improved choices, both in periods of stability and during crises. If the group charged with responsibility for integrated emergency management discourages this kind of activity, decisions made by the group are likely to be unwise or superficial.

OUTGROWTHS OF DISAGREEMENT

There are at least three noteworthy reasons for encouraging conflict in problem-solving discussions.

- By entertaining diverse ideas and perspectives, it is possible to gain a broadened understanding of the nature of the problem and its implications.
- By encouraging the expression of different ideas, a group potentially has more alternatives from which to select a solution.
- The excitement that comes from conflicting ideas stimulates healthy interaction and involvement with the group's task.

The first two reasons affect the group *product*--decisions. The third reason affects the group *process*.

A Broadened Understanding

In problem-solving discussions, the first objective is to agree on the problem or concern that prompted the meeting of the group. Although many people assume that this is a simple matter, it is a significant phase in the process of decisionmaking. Superficial attention to this first phase often leads to backtracking later or to conclusions based on an inaccurate assessment of the problem.

So, in the process of determining the problem, conflict and disagreement can be healthy. They will allow for differing perceptions and opinions, thereby resulting in a broadened perspective on the problem.

Increased Alternatives

A second reason for encouraging conflict in discussions--perhaps the most recognized and accepted rationale--is that, through disagreements, members can develop more possible solutions from which to make a final selection. Premature commitment to a solution without an adequate awareness or consideration of alternative possibilities is all too frequent. A group whose norm precludes disagreement is not likely to have an array of possible solutions from which to select. In this case, the group's decision or solution is not one that grows out of serious and open-minded deliberation, but rather is a careless gamble resulting from superficial discussion. One of the most important functions of disagreement is providing alternatives to a decision, and alternatives are necessary for anything other than rash decisionmaking. When a group does not have alternatives, it cannot make a reasoned decision. Instead, it simply ratifies the only idea that has been allowed to surface. Sound decisions grow out of earnest and reflective consideration of alternatives, which occurs only when disagreement and conflict are accepted as a constructive part of the discussion process.

Member Interaction and Involvement

The final reason for advocating conflict in discussions is that it serves to stimulate members' interest in the group and the shared problem. Conflict implies vigorous interaction over ideas. This, in turn, increases participants' involvement with the task and enhances the process of decisionmaking. A frequently cited value of discussion as a means of making decisions is that it allows for greater creativity in considering and solving problems. This, however, rests on the assumption that various opinions and values will be invited and *seriously considered* by all participants so that creative combinations of ideas may occur. Even a seemingly off-the-wall suggestion, creatively considered, could lead to a workable solution.

Healthy, noncombative disagreements provide a free and open atmosphere for discussion, thereby releasing members' creative energies for the good of the process. Conflict results in more creative thinking, greater member commitment to a decision, and a higher quality decision. Creativity seems to thrive on constructive conflict.

Thus, it should be clear that conflict is not to be avoided in discussions. On the contrary, it seems to be a positive force that can enhance both the process and the products of problem-solving discussion.

DISRUPTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

Despite the fact that conflict has some significant values for discussion, everyday experience shows that conflict can be dangerous. It can destroy a group, lead to stalemates rather than decisions, and cause major interpersonal hostilities. Whether conflict enhances or subverts discussion depends on how the conflict is managed. There are both ineffective and effective methods of dealing with it.

Disruptive Conflict

Disruptive conflict occurs when group members do not understand the value of conflict and do not have or do not use constructive means of channelling it into deliberations. In a disruptive situation, a competitive climate exists.

Members perceive the disagreement as a game in which someone will win and others must lose. There is no common goal and no sense of team spirit in which all ideas belong to all participants. "Getting my own way" is more important than finding the best understanding of and solution for the group's common problem.

In disruptive situations, members tend to employ such defense mechanisms as aggression, withdrawal, repression, or projection of blame onto others. Members also tend to become locked into their own viewpoints and are unwilling even to consider the possible value of others' ideas. Frequently in disruptive situations, members will resort to personal attacks instead of focusing their disagreement on the issues.

In this type of situation, there naturally are some undesirable effects. The group may form cliques or subgroups within itself. Members will be less likely to understand (or even try to understand) one another's motives and opinions because hostility and distrust are great. When disruptive conflict penetrates discussion, it may be impossible to reach any decision because the group becomes deadlocked, and no member is willing to shift his or her position. Even if the group does manage to reach a decision, members will seldom be satisfied with it. Disruptive conflict, then, is negative in its nature and its effects; it is the kind of conflict that should be avoided since it leads to nothing constructive.

Constructive Conflict

By contrast, *constructive* conflict--sometimes called *integrative* conflict because different viewpoints are integrated as a result of it--develops when members understand the utility of disagreement and have acquired methods of managing conflict effectively. In integrative situations, their team spirit is high and commitment to group goals is strong. Members assume that their disagreements stem from sincere involvement with the common problem and that, by discussing differing ideas, they will eventually come to an agreement better than any one individual's initial suggestions. In integrative situations, members cooperate with one another. They tend to be supportive of others' ideas and

open to considering the merits of opinions different from their own. Disagreements are confined to the issues and do not involve personalities.

When healthy conflicts occur, group cohesion usually is increased because members have survived some "rough waters" and have emerged with a sound solution. They also have learned that they can trust one another to be fair and open-minded. Members usually are able to reach decisions of which they are proud. The cumulative result is a process, as well as a product, that satisfies the whole group. This type of conflict preserves healthy working relationships as well as improves final decisions.

Conflict is a necessary and integral part of realistic and effective problem-solving discussion. It is the essence of sound decisionmaking because disagreement is the best vehicle for broadening perspectives, discovering alternatives, and stimulating creative interaction among members. The effects of disagreement, however, depend on how it is managed. Conflict can be disruptive or it can be constructive. When mismanaged, conflict can destroy a group's effectiveness. When handled well, it can greatly increase the quality of a group's work and make members feel proud of the work in their group.

Training in the nature of conflict and the methods of managing it is a pressing need for all people who participate in all-hazards emergency management. The negative associations of conflict must be dispelled and replaced with more realistic conceptions that make the legitimate distinction between constructive and disruptive conflict. When participants see that conflict can be a positive force in discussion, they are better prepared to adopt effective personal attitudes and behaviors in problem-solving situations.

Managing conflict involves the most appropriate strategy for the situation. The more successful a manager, the more constructive the conflict will become.

NOTES

INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY: COORDINATION IN AN EMERGENCY

A case study depicting a disaster is presented on the following pages. The scenario is designed to allow you to consider some practical issues concerning coordination among individuals and organizations in a representative disaster situation.

Your task is to analyze the case study and respond to the questions following it. Some important information may be missing, as is often the case in real situations; other information may be extraneous. Given these circumstances, be as thorough as possible in your analysis and responses.

You will have 20 minutes to complete the individual portion of the activity. Then, small groups will have another 30 minutes to compare and contrast responses, identifying differences and commonalities among them. There is not, of course, a best approach; the approach selected reflects a point of view and interpretation of circumstances.

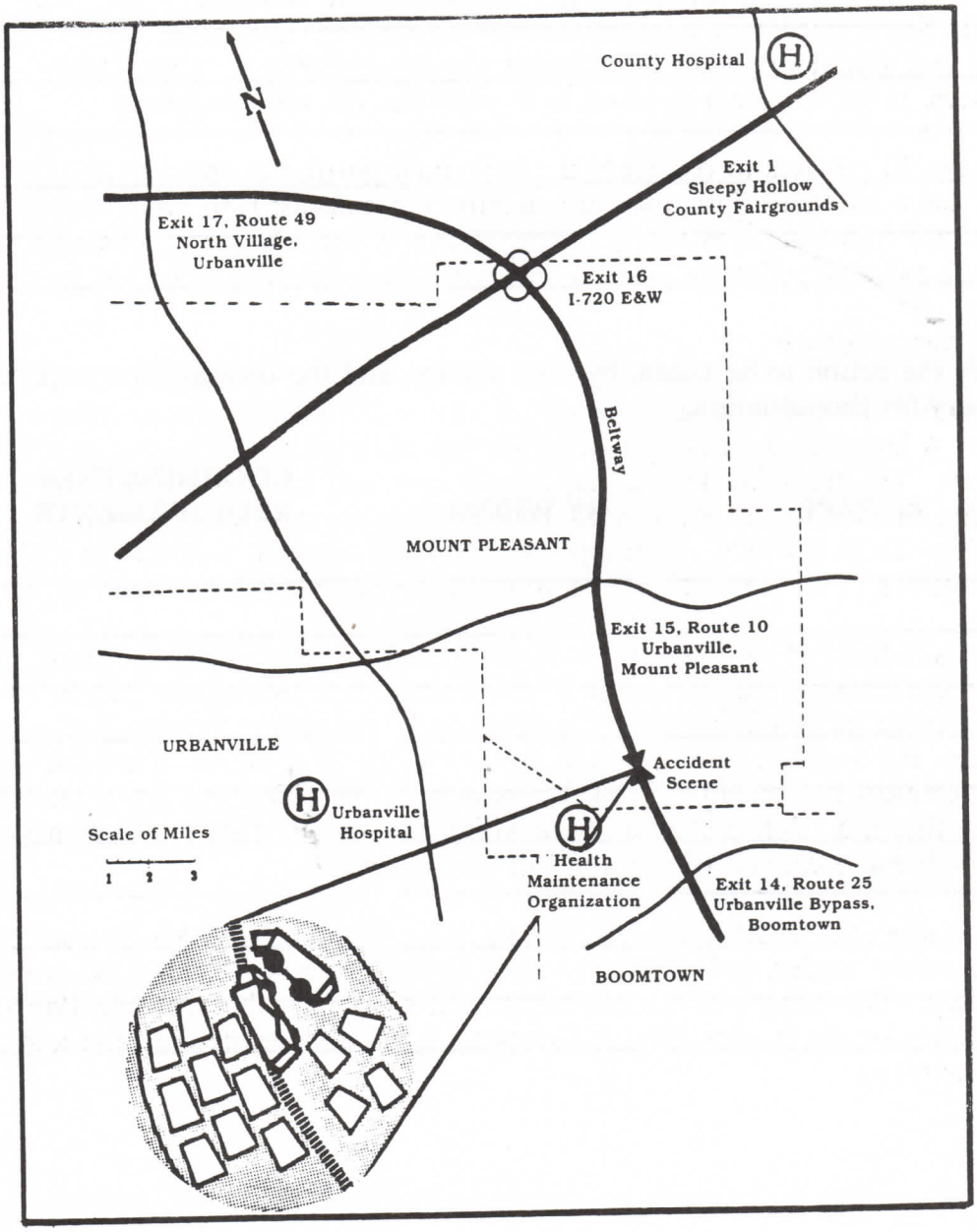
Traffic Accident Scenario

A serious traffic accident has occurred during rush hour on the beltway surrounding Urbanville. A large truck carrying toxic chemicals collided with a school bus loaded with children. The truck jackknifed and flipped over and is releasing this unknown chemical into the air; this contaminated air is shifting toward an adjacent residential area, aided by 20-30 K winds. Utility poles have been severed, resulting in widespread power disruptions in the city. The Emergency Operating Center has been activated.

Traffic is totally blocked on the outer loop of the beltway (two lanes northbound) on which the accident occurred and has backed up more than two miles. Traffic on the inner lanes (three lanes southbound) is snarled and moving slowly as people reduce speed to view the accident. Some volunteers are at the site, including a doctor, and a crowd of spectators has emerged from the residential area. Victims are receiving rudimentary first aid. Police should arrive within five minutes; they already have established CB radio contact with a motorist at the scene.

The accident site and residential area fall under the jurisdiction of Mt. Pleasant, a separate township bordering Urbanville. Both Urbanville and Mt. Pleasant are within Scenic County. The beltway is a State-maintained road, patrolled by State Police. All jurisdictions are served by Ace Energy Company, a privately owned electric and natural gas utility company.

Mt. Pleasant has separate police and fire departments but no large medical facilities. A privately-run Health Maintenance Organization, a ten-bed out-patient facility, is located one-and-a-half miles west in Boomtown. The Urbanville Hospital, with full ambulance services, is seven miles away from the Boomtown exit, through winding city streets. The County Hospital is 25 miles away, but access highways are good. County Hospital has one emergency helicopter. The Urbanville police also have one helicopter that can be used to transport three people at a time. However, the only place a helicopter can land is on the inner loop of the beltway.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. List all pertinent *facts* stated in the scenario.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Identify the action to be taken, by what agency, and the coordination requirements necessary for this situation.

ACTION	BY WHOM	COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

3. Potential conflicts are inherent in situations like these; identify the most prominent sources of potential conflict in this situation and recommend steps or approaches to take in resolving or managing them productively.

SUMMARY OF UNIT III

To a great degree, the success of emergency management efforts depends upon smooth, effective interactions among the many members of the emergency team. The team is extremely diverse, encompassing a full range of personnel whose involvements and concerns with the emergency function may be full-time, temporary, mild, intense, or any combination of these. Each individual and organization in the system has a distinct point of view, a distinct set of priorities, and a distinct way of operating. Yet when emergency protection is at stake--whether mitigation, preparedness, response, or recovery--it is clear that the overall goal of ensuring community safety must take precedence over the interests of individuals and agencies.

This unit has emphasized issues that may arise in emergency system interactions and has presented ways of solving problems that could develop as a result of different concerns, experience, perspectives, responsibilities, and personalities. If the overall goal of community safety is, in fact, the key to the functioning of the emergency management system, then each member of the team must be expert at playing a cooperative, harmonious role that focuses on that goal. The lessons, films, and, particularly, the activity were designed to aid you in forming a backdrop against which you can examine the situation in your home community and assess your own role within that system. Understanding, based on knowledgeable examination and carried through to professional development, can be invaluable.

TAKE IT HOME

ELEMENTS OF TEAMWORK

The items listed below are some of the key elements in achieving group teamwork. Rate your home emergency management organization on each of the eight items by circling the appropriate number.

A. HOW CLEAR ARE THE GROUP GOALS?

1	2	3	4	5
No apparent goals	Goal confusion, uncertainty, or conflict	Average goal clarity	Goals mostly clear	Goals very clear

B. HOW MUCH TRUST AND OPENNESS EXIST IN THE GROUP?

1	2	3	4	5
Distrust and no openness	Litttle trust, some openness	Average trust and openness	Considerable trust and openness	Remarkable trust and openness

C. HOW MUCH EMPATHY DO GROUP MEMBERS HAVE FOR EACH OTHER?

1	2	3	4	5
No empathy	Little empathy	Average empathy	Considerable empathy	Remarkable empathy

D. HOW MUCH ATTENTION IS PAID TO PROCESS (THE WAY THE GROUP IS WORKING)?

1	2	3	4	5
No attention to process	Little attention to process	Some concern with group process	A fair amount of attention to process	Very concerned with process

E. HOW ARE GROUP LEADERSHIP NEEDS MET?

1	2	3	4	5
Not met, drifting	Leadership concentrated in one person	Some leadership sharing	Leadership functions distributed	Leadership needs met creatively

F. HOW ARE GROUP DECISIONS MADE?

1	2	3	4	5
Unable to reach decisions	Made by a few or by one person	By majority vote	Attempts at integrating minority vote	Full participation and tested consensus

G. HOW WELL ARE THE RESOURCES OF THE GROUP AS A WHOLE UTILIZED?

1	2	3	4	5
One or two contributed	Several tried to contribute but were discouraged	Average use of group resources	Group resources well used and encouraged	Group resources fully and effectively used

H. HOW MUCH DO MEMBERS FEEL THEY BELONG TO THE GROUP?

1	2	3	4	5
Members have no sense of belonging	Members not close but some friendly relations	About average sense of belonging	Warm sense of belonging	Strong sense of belonging among members

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