

Unit One Assignment

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Disasters happen, and the best we can hope for in the occurrence of such an event, is that those impacted have created a usable plan to help them cope. Many times, however, help from others will be needed, and this is where the Federal Emergency Management Agency (or FEMA) comes in. With all of the needed resources at their disposal, the people of FEMA are able to help communities and individuals with recovery and rebuilding of lives.

FEMA provides information that is available to everyone about ways to make homes, businesses and communities stronger and more resilient in the face of both natural and manmade disasters. From hurricanes, to snow events; bombings, shootings and even biological terror incidents, FEMA has a plan to help those affected recover. They offer grants such as the 'Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (FEMA, n.d.),' or AFG, to help communities protect and support the people living there. The goal of the AFG is "to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations (FEMA, n.d.)." In addition to the grants to help communities recover from natural disasters, FEMA also offers different 'Preparedness' Grants which are grants given to help communities in cases of non-disaster events such as "a weapons of mass destruction terrorism incident involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive devices and cyber-attacks (FEMA, 2015)."

In order to provide the widespread recovery assistance that is needed during and after a disaster, the agency (FEMA) certainly needs to have a management system like no other in place. The management system that has been implemented by FEMA is made up of a single command structure known as Unified command. Under Unified

Command, personnel use a single planning process to come up with a single Incident Action plan (FEMA, 2/11/15, p. 23). In this type of management structure, the various facilities needed are shared between all responsible officials, command staffs and planning sections together. This would help facilitate coordination between all involved in the effort.

The Unified Command, in turn, is made up of various Incident Commanders from different jurisdictions all operating together toward a single cause. It is the Incident Commander's responsibility to ensure the safety of personnel, provide information to those involved in the recovery effort and to establish a liaison with the other agencies involved in the incident (p. 12). It is the Incident Commander who is then responsible for all Incident Command System management functions. However, Incident commanders also have the authority to appoint Deputy Incident Commanders to perform certain tasks, represent an agency which shares jurisdiction with his/her agency and, if needed, take over the incident command function (p.11). The Incident Commander then delegates specific functions to different sections. These sections consist of operations, planning, logistics and finance and administration. Each of the sections will be staffed by a 'Section Chief' who will report directly back to the Incident Commander (p. 15).

Not all disasters will call for every section and it is the operations section which determines whether or not there is a need for the other sections. In the case that there is not a need for a certain section, say, logistics or finance and administration, then the operations section staff will take over that section's duties. The Operations Section can then create as many teams as is needed to cover these added responsibilities. These

teams are made up of a single Team Leader and up to seven team members (p. 17). If the teams were to be bigger than that, there would be a danger of losing the ability to oversee the span of control or “the number of subordinates directly reporting to a leader/manager” (Myatt, 11/05/2012).

Each individual involved in a recovery, rescue, rebuilding effort has their own unique responsibilities and it is of utmost importance that they do their part as flawlessly as possible to ensure the success of the operation.

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