

Category 5

Criterion 5D: Domestic Preparedness Program

The agency operates an all-hazards preparedness program that includes a coordinated multiagency response plan designed to provide the community preparedness and resiliency in response to terrorist threats or attacks, major disasters, and other large-scale emergencies occurring at or in the immediate area.

Summary:

The department is an all-hazards agency that is National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant. The capabilities of the department include: structural firefighting, wildland firefighting, hazardous materials, mass casualty, structural collapse, confined space, high and low angle rope rescue, water rescue, ice rescue, and vehicle extrication. The department maintains two regional response trailers for the northeast region of Kansas. The mass casualty trailer is capable of rendering aid for up to 100 patients of differing levels of injury or illness severity. The Northeast Kansas Taskforce 2 Search and Rescue trailer is capable of prolonged search and rescue operations.

Both taskforce trailers can respond to any agency in the northeast region of Kansas if requested for prolonged operation periods. These NIMS compliant trailers ensure a smooth integration in outside operations jurisdictions. If a local type III or higher-level emergency occurs, the department will staff three Emergency Service Functions (ESF) in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Those positions are ESF4: Firefighting, ESF9: Search and Rescue, and ESF 10: HAZMAT.

Performance Indicators:

CC 5D.1 The agency maintains a local emergency operations/all-hazards plan that defines roles and responsibilities of all participating departments and/or external agencies. The agency participates in maintaining and revising the plan with the AHJ.

Description

The department participates in the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), coordinated by Douglas County Emergency Management (DGEM), and meets with representatives from other local agencies, monthly. The LEPC consists of agencies that are community stakeholders and can offer specialized assistance in the community during an emergency.

Douglas County has a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in place. The specific information within the COOP is currently being updated. The City of Lawrence has not had an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in the past. Over the last several months, DGEM, the Lawrence Kansas Police Department (LKPD), and the department have begun the process of creating an EOP for the city. The department continues to work with the AHJ to establish a standardized response with city resources for an all-hazards plan.

Appraisal

The LEPC arrangement has met the needs of the department and the community. Many of the representatives from the participating agencies in the LEPC are local resources for the community's identified hazards. This collaboration has created an active working relationship with external partners if the need for response or mitigation presents itself.

The department has participated in annual Emergency Support Functions (ESF) tabletop exercises, with outside agencies, to ensure all agencies are familiar with position responsibilities during an EOC activation. These exercises have provided an opportunity for participants to review ESF positions and better understand how each ESF integrates into the NIMS systems. The exercises have created beneficial learning opportunities for the department to lead and participate in.

Plan

The department will continue to work with the LEPC and DGEM to staff the ESF positions necessary for successful outcomes. The City of Lawrence EOP will continue developing with a target completion by the end of 2022. The department will continue the process of reviewing and updating the COOP, which will be completed by the end of 2022. The department's division chief of training will continue to work closely with the DGEM to maintain the COOP as well as the City of Lawrence EOP.

References

Douglas County Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) - available on-site

EOC Exercise Documentation

City of Lawrence EOP Documentation

Douglas County EOP

5D.2 The agency complies with the National Incident Management System, or other appropriate incident management system, and its operational methods are compatible with all external response agencies.

Description

The department is compliant with the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) and incorporates NIMS into its culture by requiring members to have training and education in NIMS. The department operates on an emergency scene using the principles of NIMS and expands and contracts the incident according to the needs on the incident. Upon hire, each new member acquires ICS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS-200: Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response, ICS-700: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System and, IS-800: National Response Framework. Prior to submitting an application for promotion to captain, members are required to become certified in ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents, and ICS-400: Advanced ICS for Command and General staff for members wishing to promote to battalion chief, division chief, or fire chief.

Appraisal

NIMS is used regularly to provide the framework for emergency and non-emergency operations. The department's use of NIMS has provided a predictable chain of command on incident scenes.

NIMS is also used throughout the city for other events such as the COVID-19 pandemic response. The Incident Command System (ICS) was used to manage the day-to-day operations throughout the pandemic. The use of the ICS enabled the city and its resources to respond and adjust to varying needs that arose. The department took a leadership role through the implementation and management of the city's ICS to assist other city departments and employees in participating in vital roles. Through this event, the city acknowledged the need for thorough preparation and plans to strengthen its ability for quick response and deployment if needed.

Most recently, during the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I Basketball Championships, the department implemented NIMS and developed an Incident

Action Plan (IAP) for multiple participating agencies. The management of this large-scale event was successful and demonstrated effective collaboration and planning between multiple agencies.

Plan

The training division will continue to deliver training to all department employees to strengthen the use of NIMS for emergency and non-emergency incidents. This training will include how the Blue Card Command model is integrated into NIMS. Training will also consist of a basic understanding of an IAP, how they are developed, and what implementation looks like.

References

SOP 601.10 Promotional Assessment Process (pages 1-2)

2022 Incident Action Plan (IAP)

COVID-19 Unified Command Document

5D.3 The agency has a process in place for requesting additional resources not readily available in the community served.

Description

The department has a process in place for requesting additional resources due to the drawdown of resources, or when the scope of an incident exceeds department capabilities. SOP 109.10 Staffing-Shift and Events identifies drawdown and exhaustion deployment levels, which requires an operations chief officer to initiate member call-back, or request mutual aid from outside agencies through Douglas County Emergency Communications Center (DGECC).

SOP 202.30 Automatic Aid, Mutual Aid, Fire Medical Standby describes the dispatch, response, and on-site operations of department resources for mutual aid requests. When a request for mutual aid is made, incoming resources are met by a department representative who will coordinate radio operations and distribute map books.

In 2006, the Kansas Legislature created a statewide mutual aid compact, Kansas Mutual Aid System (KMAS), to expand resource availability to all participating political subdivisions in the State of Kansas, for the purpose of preventing, mitigating, responding to, and recovering from locally declared emergencies and disasters. The department does not have any automatic aid agreements.

Appraisal

The mutual aid responses we receive have been adequate to fill response gaps during the drawdown of department resources, however, the response time of mutual aid companies often hinders the effectiveness of these requests. When a request for mutual aid resources has been made, they frequently have an approximate 30-to-45 minutes response time to the City of Lawrence.

The use of resources outside the city, but within Douglas County, has been infrequent due to the unpredictable staffing levels of volunteer agencies. The department has used local volunteer agencies on a limited basis to maintain response coverage within the city,

however, these situations have been dependent on the staffing level of volunteers with appropriate fire-based certifications.

The lack of automatic aid agreements and minimal resource management through the DGECC has created insufficient emergency deployment of additional resources.

Plan

To bolster department resiliency and reliability, additional resources will continue to be requested through the annual budget process. However, the department understands that additional resources will not eliminate the need for sound mutual aid agreements to be in place. Along with fostering current mutual aid agreements, the department will also investigate the potential to create new mutual agreements with other surrounding agencies.

Additionally, the EOC will still be activated as necessary depending on incident complexity, size or duration and can initiate the process of mobilizing regional or state resources.

References

Douglas County Fire District No. 1 Mutual Aid Agreement

SOP 109.10 Staffing-Shift and Events

SOP 202.30 Automatic Aid, Mutual Aid, Fire Medical Standby

Kansas Mutual Aid System (<https://kansastag.gov/KDEM.asp?PageID=617>)

5D.4 The agency has processes to record information and provide data on needed resources, the scope and nature of the event, and field resources deployed to local, state/provincial, and federal agencies.

Description

Douglas County utilizes a cloud-based solution called Salamander, to assist in accountability efforts of personnel and resource sharing during planned or unplanned large-scale events. The department’s Administrative Division and Training Division work with DCEM to provide monthly updates on department resources. The Salamander software includes information such as personnel credentials and specialized training, so the appropriate resources are sent to an event.

Web EOC is utilized by the EOC to request resources from across the State of Kansas for the fulfillment of needed resources at larger-scale events. The department works with DCEM to make these requests.

Appraisal

The department has worked closely with DCEM to provide data relative to available department resources and has seen success in resource requesting / sharing.

Plan

The department will continue working closely with DCEM to provide and exchange data when necessary. Resource requests and sharing will continue to be facilitated through DCEM.

References

- Salamander Software (available on-site)
- Salamander Resource Summary Report

5D.5 The agency conducts and documents a vulnerability assessment and has operational plans to protect the agency's specific critical infrastructure, including but not limited to materials, supplies, apparatus, facilities security, fuel, and information systems.

Description

The department's 2022 CRASOC identifies and documents critical infrastructure throughout the response area. The vulnerability assessment offers a broad look at the department's response area and offers an adequate assessment of the geographical area.

Douglas County is a part of the Kansas Homeland Security Region K Hazard Mitigation Plan. The current Douglas County mitigation plan is not integrated into the department's CRASOC.

Related to the agency's critical infrastructure, each fire medical station has a backup generator in place, those generators are tested regularly and maintained for functionality. The city has two fueling stations for city vehicles and provides the ability to purchase fuel and other consumables through a purchasing card as needed. City buildings are protected by an electronic locking system that allows security levels to be assigned to each employee and gives access specifically to that employee's status.

Information Technology is managed at City Hall. The system is regularly backed up off-site and has dedicated employees managing the security and any potential breaches or attacks.

Appraisal

In 2021, a commodity flow study was conducted by a third-party to identify what commodities are flowing in and around the department's jurisdiction. All tier II facilities in the jurisdiction are responsible for submitting their tier II paperwork to the department for hazard mitigation in the event of a release or emergency. Infrastructure information exists but has not been incorporated into department decision making on a routine basis.

Plan

The department and the City of Lawrence have a good plan in place to maintain facilities and provide the equipment and materials necessary for day-to-day operations. City hall and all department facilities as well as other city facilities have adequate security in place to limit access only to those that need to have access. The department will work with Planning and Development Services to identify critical infrastructure within planning zones as the City of Lawrence expands.

Douglas County Emergency Management provides a great resource for coordination of ESF's and exercises in case an activation is necessary. The commodity flow study and tier II reporting assists in keeping the community safe through awareness of the commodities in the agency's jurisdiction.

References

Kansas Region K Hazard Mitigation Plan (available on-site)

Douglas County Emergency Operations Plan (available on-site)

Douglas County, Kansas Radiological Emergency Response Guide (available on-site)

Commodity Flow Study

SALTO System (available on-site)

2022 CRASOC (Module 2 pages 39-62 and Module 3 pages 63-110)

5D.6 The agency has a documented continuity of operations plan, that is reviewed annually and updated at least every five years, to ensure essential operations are maintained.

Description

The department does have a COOP. The COOP outlines several key partners and provides guidance for operations should it be activated. Key staff positions are identified, and responsibilities are outlined in the document. The department works with DGEM staff to educate and update the information, as needed.

Appraisal

The COOP is a thorough document that provides a great overview of role responsibilities. However, little training has been provided to make sure each employee knows their position within the plan. The COOP has not been updated as often as it should be. The last update was in 2020 but included some outdated information.

The existing COOP identifies specific personnel throughout the document. The current revisions include positions instead of people to minimize outdated information. An additional contact list is also included for cross reference of who fills specific positions. This additional contact list can be updated without having to update the entire document, which will prevent mistakes being made throughout the document.

Plan

The COOP will become the responsibility of the division chief of training for updating and providing training and education on the roles and responsibilities of those key positions identified within the COOP. The COOP will be reviewed on an annual basis to keep contact information of all identified members up to date as well as reviewing reference documents to ensure the COOP addresses new, relevant information.

References

Douglas County Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) - available on-site

5D.7 The agency has processes in place for intelligence sharing with other public safety agencies.

Description

The department participates in several intelligence sharing networks throughout the City of Lawrence and Douglas County. Douglas County utilizes Everbridge for the critical communication platform. Through the incident command structure, the department uses Incident Action Plans to record and communicate critical incident information. The Lawrence Kansas Police Department shares information through systems and bulletins related to criminal activity. Through the department's COVID-19 pandemic response, critical partnerships were strengthened by utilizing information sharing systems like video conferencing, Microsoft Teams, and Microsoft Outlook. The Douglas County EOC has begun tabletop exercises for each ESF to practice capabilities.

The department also utilizes Vector Scheduling for daily staffing and personnel resource management. The city conducts executive team meetings weekly to share information and collaborate. Douglas County Fire Chiefs meet every other month to share information. The department also participates in chief and training meetings with Johnson County public safety agencies.

Appraisal

The current plan on dissemination of information has improved with the use of video conferencing, having the ability to have "just in time" meetings when necessary; however, a more formal and predictable plan would be preferable. Regularly scheduled meetings allow for familiarity of participants and the developed relationships will make the exchange of information easier.

Collaboration throughout Douglas County and Johnson County has occurred regularly, but communication has not maintained consistency with local partners like LMH Health, Lawrence Douglas County Public Health Department, Bert Nash, Douglas County Sheriff and Lawrence Kansas Police Department, Kansas University Public Safety Office.

Improved coordination, planning and cooperation between these agencies on a regular basis would enhance the relationships and reduce any gaps that may exist. Continual

involvement could build trust and professional relationships that could improve emergency coordination in a moment's notice. Having more tabletop exercises, led by Douglas County EOC, with all ESF's being represented would also improve intelligence sharing.

Plan

The department's command staff will explore the possibility of developing a regularly scheduled meeting group to focus on the exchange of information between local agencies, their capabilities, and areas of needed improvement. This group would include relevant external partners who participate in ESF activities. Work with DCEM to increase the frequency of exercises involving all ESF functions.

References

Douglas County Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) - available on-site

2022 ESF Wildland Fire TTX Exercise Plan

2022 Incident Action Plan

Chief Meeting Agenda

Everbridge (available on-site)

5D.8 The agency has a crisis communications or public information plan.

Description

The department’s public information plan consists of the position of Public Information Officer (PIO). Adjusting to department turnover, four individuals have been identified to assist in the public information plan and act as PIOs. The department previously operated with one PIO. The city has a communications and creative resources director and team that handle the release of public information. The department’s PIOs, the Communications Department and creative resources director work closely to provide timely and accurate information to the public as needed.

Matters that relate specifically to the department are handled primarily by the Administrative Division. The department has developed working relationships with local news agencies and information outlets to make the distribution of information relatively easy. The Administrative Division also manages the information released through our social media presence.

Appraisal

Having one PIO within the department was acceptable; however, it did not allow the department to have depth through information sharing. This directly impacted social media activity. Specific training has been offered to additional command staff to create depth. Those training opportunities are upcoming and have yet to be completed.

Working with the Emergency Management office on more significant incidents brings in other resources for a PIO. When the EOC is activated, a PIO group is included. The PIO group is exercised through scenario-based training through the EOC to ensure a single consistent message is delivered to the public.

Plan

The department plans to utilize four department employees to fulfill PIO roles. The PIO group will attend PIO training, as it becomes available in late 2022 and early 2023. It has been identified that the department’s social media presence and information sharing is inadequate.

The department's Administration Division will continue actively participating in the communications and marketing team meetings.

References

PIO Marketing Communications Team Meeting Agenda

CC 5D.9 The agency conducts a formal and documented program appraisal, at least annually, to determine the program’s impacts and outcomes, and to measure performance and progress in reducing risk.

Description

The department conducts a formal and documented program appraisal annually that summarizes the program’s impacts, outcomes, and effectiveness in the prior year. New goals are outlined in the upcoming year within this document.

Appraisal

The department’s assigned program manager and supportive staff have been able to complete an annual program appraisal. These appraisals are provided to the AHJ for review, as well as posted on the department’s external /internal website for employee review as part of the Annual Compliance Report.

Plan

The department will continue to utilize the appraisal to improve performance within the program as well as develop more efficient operational procedures based on the prior year’s performance.

References

2021 Domestic Preparedness Program Appraisal