



FEMA

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Chris Conklin
Honolulu-Pacific Federal Executive Board
300 Ala Moana Blvd.
Box 50268, Suite 4-123
Honolulu, HI 96850

Dear Chris:

Thank you for participating in the November 13, 2018, Emergency Preparedness Working Group hurricane discussion/table-top exercise. A number of recommendations and findings came out of the discussion, which are memorialized here for potential action.

Hurricane COOP Lessons Learned

Through discussion of the actual actions taken by agencies during the 2018 hurricane season, as well as a facilitated discussion of what actions would have been required had Hurricane Lane made catastrophic landfall on Oahu, the following lessons/strengths were identified:

- Safety of the PJKK Federal Building. Several tenants of the PJKK Federal Building indicated confusion regarding the meaning of the building's closure to the public during Hurricane Lane (this closure allowed federal agencies' employees to continue using the building if they chose). Some tenants thought the windows had been hardened with blast-resistant film, while the GSA representatives indicated that, unless there had been specific customer-funded requirements, this is not the case. The GSA representatives also indicated that the building's generator and electrical system are housed in the basement and vulnerable to flooding. GSA has requested but not received funding to mitigate these risks. There was also some discussion of which services would be powered by the generator; agencies who are not sure whether they have emergency lighting in their spaces were encouraged to check during the next planned power outage test at the building (not currently scheduled).
- Just-in-time training. The majority of those attending the discussion indicated that, despite numerous employee training sessions, many employees had "just-in-time" questions when Hurricane Lane was imminent. Agencies should consider providing just-in-time training/announcements for employees on relevant plans (e.g., hurricane response plans, continuity of operations plans) when threats are imminent and employees are focused.

- Notification systems. Several agencies make use of emergency notification systems that allow supervisors to not only notify staff of developments, but also receive feedback from employees on their situation/status. Those without such systems were very interested in whether low-cost solutions might be available for their use.
- Post-landfall employee contact. Most agencies are dependent on the operability of text messaging following a disaster to contact their staff. One agency, however, has identified key points of contact (POCs) at geographically dispersed locations and issued them radios so that, in the absence of other forms of communication, employees can physically make their way to these POCs and report their status, to be communicated back to headquarters. This same agency indicated they have an online reporting system for staff to report their status.
- Post-landfall situational updates. Most present found the real-world requests for status updates from headquarters offices (their own and others) to be onerous during Hurricane Lane. GSA had an online system to report tenant status, but it did not appear to be accessed by those agencies in D.C. with questions.
- Pre-identified COOP locations/post-disaster planning. Not all agencies have pre-identified COOP sites. Some have planned for staff to telework, but realized during the discussion of catastrophic hurricane impacts that this may not be realistic in such a scenario, given the vulnerability of Hawaii housing and power infrastructure. Agencies without COOP locations were encouraged to identify sites and develop written agreements for their use. Some agencies plan to devolve their activities post-disaster to off-island locations; some, however, still rely on paper records that would limit the effectiveness of devolution.
- HP-FEB information. Though perhaps biased by the self-selection of those who attended an HP-FEB event, attendees were pleased with the frequency and content of HP-FEB messaging during the 2018 hurricane season. The HPFEB serves as an information conduit between federal agencies and state and local government during emergency situations, including sharing situational information on federal facility and workforce issues. The HPFEB agreed to pursue an interactive, web-based solution as an easy tool to help agencies share individual status, concerns and needs during an even with the broader federal agency community.
- Generator/fuel reliance. GSA has on-site fuel for 7 days of emergency generator operations, and a contractor for re-supply (assuming availability). The Marine Corps expects to provide fuel for emergency response needs, rather than being a fuel customer. Most other agencies did not report having generators or plans for refueling.

Table-Top Conduct Comments

Most participants reported that they found the discussions helpful and focused. Agencies represented included FAA, USDHS/FEMA and USDHS/CBP, HP-FEB, GSA, USDA/FSA and USDA/NRCS, EEOC, and MCBH Kaneohe Bay.

- Attendance. Participants indicated that the discussion would have been strengthened by broader agency/department participation. One attendee suggested sharing training/resource information via email for those who did not attend.
- Frequency. Participants recommended that exercises be held at least annually. They also recommended additional COOP training, including FEMA's COOP training course.

I look forward to continuing FEMA's support for the HP-FEB and for the preparedness efforts of the departments and agencies the HP-FEB supports. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (808) 851-7900 or via e-mail at Colby.Stanton@fema.dhs.gov.

Respectfully,



Colby Stanton
Director of Readiness
FEMA Region IX Pacific Area Office

cc: Robert Pesapane, FEMA Region IX Federal Preparedness Coordinator