



Disaster Reserve Workforce Division Established to Help Meet Agency Mission

FEMA's disaster reservists, national and regional cadre managers, program managers and all ten regions now have a centralized office solely dedicated to the unique aspects of preparing, training, supporting and deploying the disaster workforce, with particular emphasis on the disaster reserve workforce.



Adm. Harvey Johnson outlines senior leadership's vision for the disaster reserve workforce at the Cadre Managers' Workshop in March
Photo: Nick Smallwood

After numerous studies over many years, the new Disaster Reserve Workforce Division (DRWD) will actually implement the first reengineering of the Stafford Act's intermittent workforce in recent memory.

With an eye toward paving the way for a long-term program based on pre-disaster readiness management, Administrator Paulison appointed Donna M. Dannels, a 25-year FEMA veteran and Senior Executive to lead the new office.

Her main objective is to implement standards and systems to better support, train and deploy the disaster reserve workforce.

Admiral Harvey Johnson shared his perspective on a transformed disaster reserve workforce during his more than two-hour presentation to a conference of national and regional cadre managers in March 2008.

Admiral Johnson stated that bolstering the reserve workforce program, better training, and better support of reservists were his top priorities.

In his closing comments to the more than 130 workforce participants, the Admiral candidly summed up the current leadership's vision for mission success, which relies heavily on a stronger more robust disaster workforce.

"It is not enough to just leave it (the Agency) better than you found it, but better positioned for future success."



Disaster Reserve Workforce Division Director Donna Dannels answers questions about the new Reserve Workforce program during the Cadre Managers' Workshop in March
Photo: Nick Smallwood

Hurricane Season: Time to Practice What We Preach

By Alice Carr, HQ External Affairs

Hurricane season 2008 is approaching and being prepared can take on many meanings.

As FEMA employees we are in the business of helping people during times of disaster, but before disaster strikes everyone needs to be prepared. It is a time of "practicing what we preach" and putting ourselves first. Once that call is received to deploy, there will not be time to put personal and legal affairs in place.

The best plan of action begins with anticipating what happens once you are required to be apart from your family for an indefinite period of time and cannot make contact with your family and friends.

Items such as estate planning, wills and trusts, medical planning, living wills, general and special powers of attorney, property and financial affairs management, are very complex, and are not generally thought about on a day-to-day basis.

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Produced by the Disaster Reserve Workforce Division

*The Administrator's
Corner*



Administrator
R.. David Paulison

FEMA Needs You

The years following 9/11 and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ushered in a new day for FEMA—significantly broadening our preparedness mission. These years also ushered in a new day for our disaster workforce – significantly broadening our expectations of this force.

And now, as we ask more of you, we ask more for you – and, we are moving forward aggressively to adapt the Reserve Workforce program to our new vision.

We ask that you stay the course while the newly established Disaster Reserve Workforce Division puts in place long-term enhancements that strengthen your status as a critically needed FEMA employee and better prepare you for your job specific capabilities. The mandates in the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act legislation support these changes and help ensure my efforts to improve the Reserve Workforce program will not be affected by the upcoming administration change. It is my intent that these enhancements are anchored by policies that will endure over time.

In the field you are the face of our mission success. With our new disaster workforce office fully supporting your unique needs, I am confident the agency will be prepared long-term to provide to the nation a reserve force that is consistently strong in numbers, strong in skill sets and strong in spirit.

Letter from Donna M. Dannels, DRWD Director

To our reservists,

Your work as a Disaster Assistance Employee is vital to FEMA's mission. In recognition of this, Administrator Paulison has taken a number of steps to acknowledge your past, present and future role with the agency, and to follow through with actions to implement FEMA's Strategic Plan.

Recognition comes first by way of an office and program built solely around the unique needs of a geographically dispersed reserve workforce. The newly established Disaster Reserve Workforce Division (DRWD) is now in place, albeit not fully staffed, to provide consistent standards of support, training and deployment for you – the reservist.

While some enhancements require time to implement, I can assure you that we have enthusiastically started that journey.

Repeatedly you have told me that we need to communicate with you more often and provide you more and better information.

Some of the immediate communication improvements you have seen or will soon see include:

- An email in-box so that you can "talk" to DRWD at your convenience. This box is monitored daily, and responses are timely. (FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov)
- A DRWD web portal to provide you access, *regardless of deployment status*, to information for the entire reserve workforce, and also tailored to cadres and regions.
- The "On Call" newsletter, formerly produced through External Affairs, has been expanded to "speak" to all cadres. DRWD will publish this online newsletter on a bi-monthly basis, and you will be able to access it either through the DRWD web portal from your personal computer or within the

FEMA firewall. It is also available at <http://fema.gov/pao/daeinfo.shtm>.

Other DRWD initiatives underway include:

- A web-based ADD system to allow the option of checking in and out of a Joint Field Office (JFO) via the Agency intranet, as well as to update your emergency contact information;
- Job-specific task books and consistent credentialing plans for each position;
- An advisory group, which will include reservists, to provide input to the workforce transformation process;
- Policies to allow sick leave and administrative leave.

Know that we are moving forward in other areas as well: pursuing legislation to allow access to health insurance and retirement benefits and to eliminate the offset to salary for retired FEMA annuitants; and, policies to provide equitable access to training.

During my 25-plus years with FEMA I have witnessed your dedication to FEMA's mission and to our country; so, when I was asked to accept the responsibility of implementing and institutionalizing functional and holistic changes for our reserve workforce, I proudly accepted.

I say to you now, quite simply, that the value you bring to FEMA, and ultimately to the American public, *is* greatly appreciated.

This is the first of many thanks extended to you.



Donna Dannels,
DRWD Director

Video Vignettes Tell Larger FEMA Stories

By John Shea, HQ External Affairs

Ready? Action! External Affairs is producing Internet-based documentary shorts, called Webisodes, that will show a day in the life of . . . a reservist, a disaster victim, or a community impacted by a disaster.

These one-to-three minute, non-scripted vignettes will capture personal experiences that show internal and external audiences the struggles of individuals who are recovering from catastrophes, as well as the reality of disaster work in the field.

In short . . . the shorts tell the larger picture of FEMA and disaster recovery - people helping people.



FEMA "Webisodes" highlighting Greensburg recovery

In a series of Webisodes, FEMA External Affairs captured the voices of Greensburg residents and Stafford Act employees who talk candidly about the recovery process and the importance of FEMA assistance after a devastating EF-5 destroyed the community of Greensburg, Kansas, a year ago.

Since then, FEMA has installed temporary housing, removed tons of debris and provided Public Assistance and long-term planning to help the community rebuild from the ground up. This assistance meant schools would have students, businesses would have employees and customers, and that residents could work together as a community to rebuild.

To view these Webisodes, visit the Greensburg One-Year Anniversary multimedia page at <http://www.fema.gov/videos/kansas/2008/index.shtm>.

Practice What We Preach

(Continued from Page 1)

Be prepared by getting these affairs in order now so there will be no confusion or uncertainty later.

For instance if you normally pay the bills and manage the family income, these responsibilities may shift to your spouse. It may be helpful to set up your bills so you can pay them electronically through your bank.

You should also check the expiration on your driver's license, passport, and FEMA ID to be sure they do not expire while you are

deployed. Keep in mind that you cannot fly without a valid ID.

Lastly, assemble a go-kit that you can easily pack in a carry bag for quick deployment. This should include prescription medications, personal hygiene items, contact information for schools, family photos, novels, etc.

Remember, you need to be completely self-sufficient so you function at your very best, and don't become a burden to emergency operations.

First 2008 All-Hands Meeting

By Blair Gately, HQ External Affairs

Administrator Paulison told employees at the April 15 All-Hands Meeting that FEMA's Strategic Plan for 2008-2013 "provides a solid framework for every one of us to see how our individual contributions help implement FEMA's vision and mission." He said the plan bridges the individual programmatic strategies, five-year planning and budget process, the agency's vision and "is focused on the work you do every day, with an emphasis on the people in FEMA and the importance of leadership and accountability."

Deputy Administrator Johnson opened the meeting by telling employees they should view the session as a shareholders' meeting with the company's board of directors. "We're all owners of FEMA," he said. "You have a vested interest in where we're going."

Deputy Administrator for Preparedness Dennis Schrader and Human Capital Director Tim Cannon spoke to employees. Schrader talked about the National Response Framework and presented awards to employees who worked on the project. Cannon discussed FEMA's future full-time

workforce and said the agency will have 4,000 permanent, full-time employees at the end of Fiscal Year 2008. He also talked about the changes he wants to implement in his division.

In response to a question, Disaster Reserve Workforce Division (DRWD) Director Donna Dannels talked about how her new division will provide ongoing reserve workforce support. She outlined how DRWD will partner with national and regional cadre and program management over the long-term to implement a shared vision for the future workforce.

Dannels said some policy changes will allow deployed reservists to accrue sick leave and administrative leave. But she said additional legislative authorities will be necessary to give reservists access to benefits such as access to health insurance, federal savings plans and elimination of the salary offset for retired annuitants when deployed.

For more about the Disaster Reserve Workforce Division, click here: [The Disaster Reserve Workforce Division and Program](#)

Task Books Coming to JFO Near You

By Patricia LaBrosse, EMI Program Specialist

In order to ensure consistency in job performance by the disaster workforce, and to establish proficiency standards across the board, EMI trainers have been busily developing NIMS compliant, cadre-specific Disaster Workforce Task Books for use at Joint Field Offices (JFO).

These books, which are close to completion, document tasks for positions needed in JFO functional areas. The books list both the job skills expected when an employee is deployed to a JFO, and position-specific tasks that serve as a guide to performing a particular function in the field.

There are two Task Book formats: a Task Book Job Aid and a Task Book Assessment Guide.

The Job Aid may be accessed from a personal computer prior to deployment, or may be given to an employee after JFO check-in.

The Assessment Guide (Online Assessment Tool) is used by the supervisor and employee at the end of an employee's deployment. This Assessment Guide does not replace the standard performance appraisal process.

JFOs have been beta testing the Task Books since May 2007, with phased implementation beginning earlier this year. The first cadres to implement the Task Books are External Affairs and Security. NRCC, RRCC, and IMAT Task Books are next to be created.

The National JFO disaster Workforce Website is internet-accessible, so that once a staff person accepts a disaster assignment, he or she can print their specific Task Book from home.

See for yourself - go to:

<http://www.learningservices.us/FEMA/TaskBooks>.

External Affairs Partners in Training

By Susan Greatorex, Region IV Reservist

External Affairs is more than a box on an organizational chart. It's how we collectively communicate FEMA's messages about preparedness, response and recovery. "Public Disaster Communications" is one of FEMA's nine core competencies.

The second class of "E-729 External Affairs Leadership Training" at EMI in April brought together 25 students representing Public Affairs, Congressional Affairs and Community Relations. Most were FEMA reservists, with experience ranging from two years to more than 20.

However, three of the participants were U.S. Coast Guard officers, which added a new dimension and gave two DHS components the opportunity to train together as ESF-15 in advance of a disaster.

The class not only included the traditional units, workshops and presentations, but also incorporated a 4-day scenario, based on actual disaster response and recovery situations, culminating in a final exercise testing management,

strategy and communication skills.

External Affairs also includes an Intergovernmental liaison to help local and state officials understand what FEMA can and cannot do; Tribal liaison to work with federally recognized Indian nations; and a Private Sector liaison to work with businesses. These areas are recruiting reservists. For more information on recent External Affairs initiatives and activities in the field, please see the latest External Affairs supplemental edition of "On Call," as well as archived issues. at:

www.fema.gov/pao/daeinfo.shtm



Participants had the opportunity to train and exercise in several different External Affairs components during the recent leadership class at EMI. Photo: S. Greatorex

Credentialing Plans Underway for Disaster Workforce

By Marsha Clark, HQ Readiness Branch

In accordance with FEMA's strategic direction and the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, the Readiness Branch within DRWD is pursuing a single, standardized system for managing, deploying and maintaining accountability of training and credentialing of the disaster workforce.

Position task books have been developed for 216 positions, and credentialing plans to

accompany these positions are in the early development stage. These plans will show the competencies, training and experience required for each position.

A major goal of this initiative is to develop a more consistently trained disaster workforce.

Current plans are to administer the work across 4 phases, with a projected completion date of January 2010.

Deployment

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER . . . AND HURRICANE SEASON

By Christopher Grosso, Deployment



For the Deployment Branch (DB) the approach of summer is no time for lazy dog-eyeing around. It signals hurricane season - a time for reinforcing proactive communications between DB and the disaster workforce. The DB administers the Automated Deployment Database (ADD) - the agency's central resource for accurate readiness and staffing reports for FEMA and DHS managers, Congress and even the White House.

Reliability of DB reports directly depends on consistent participation by FEMA employees. This means that deployed workforce staff must call the friendly folks at ADD upon arriving and checking out at a work station, changing lodging, and traveling to and from a rotation. It is important also that reservists call ADD to update telephone and emergency contact numbers.

To ensure that the deployment process moves efficiently and effectively, a request to deploy an individual must be entered into ADD **prior** to the employee's deployment - **not** after arrival at a work station.

The Deployment Branch is reached via the ADD phone line at 888-853-9648—be sure to add it to your cell phonebook .

**Remember . . .
call ADD every 30 days to
update your availability**

888-853-9648

Mitigation

Communicating During the Inevitable

By Butch Kinerney, HQ Mitigation Directorate

Since 2004, the FloodSmart campaign has supported the National Flood Insurance Program in communicating flood risks and the importance of flood insurance to residents nationwide. Increasingly, the FloodSmart team has been tapped to support regional outreach efforts after a disaster.

A "Quick Response Unit" was created in 2005 for FloodSmart support staff to provide immediate media outreach and public communications support after a flood. Through daily weather monitoring, the team identifies areas with reported flood damage, and immediately reaches out to the regional Public Information Officers to offer support. Once approved, FloodSmart sends flood insurance claims tips and makes follow-up calls to media outlets in the affected areas.

Since 2005, this targeted outreach has generated more than 1.1 billion in media impressions, hitting every region of the country with important recovery information.

The FloodSmart team has also supported regional staff in a number of post-disaster situations by drafting talking points, providing flood-specific information, and helping prepare spokespeople to address media and local politicians.

The FloodSmart team is available to support you in responding to future flooding events.

New FloodSmart materials and outreach tools will soon be available, including:

1) Levee Outreach Toolkit: This CD compilation of resources and materials, available in mid-May, will be tailored for communities with

recently accredited levees, de-accredited levees, and provisionally accredited levees.

2) In tandem with our post-event media outreach, a new Quick Response Online Program will be

placing localized banners on news Web sites to reinforce campaign messages after a flood event - when flood-related issues are top-of-mind for people.

3) A Community Microsite on FloodSmart.gov will launch in the Fall,

and provide a centralized "one-stop shop" for access to FloodSmart materials developed specifically for State officials and Regional staff.

To request FloodSmart post-flood support, contact Mary Jo Vrem, FloodSmart Project Manager at 703-605-0633, or at maryjo.vrem@dhs.gov.



Resources NOW Available to You

The FloodSmart team has developed a number of tools and resources with you and your colleagues in mind.

1. **Flood Outreach Toolkit:** A comprehensive suite of downloadable materials is available online at www.fema.gov/library.

2. **Map Change Toolkit:** Templated brochures, fact sheets, and media materials about the insurance implications of flood map changes for various audiences are available at www.fema.gov/business/nfip/hillsbo1.shtm

For more information on recent Mitigation initiatives and activities in the field, go to <http://online.fema.net/mitigator.shtm>

Hottest DRWD Mailbox Topic

DRWD mailbox guru Catherine Dugan

Q: Who will be included in the Disaster Reserve Workforce Division Stakeholder Advisory Group? How can I volunteer to participate?

A: We are in the very early stages of developing the Stakeholder Group. The group's mission will be to provide the Division Director with recommendations on policy and to provide a conduit for two-way communication between Headquarters and the field.

The group will have representatives from all levels of the Agency, including a number of disaster reservists.

We are in the process of determining the appropriate size for the group, in order to ensure that it is effective and representative of the different types of FEMA employees.

Please watch for postings in agency newsletters and other venues as this group begins to take shape. These postings will describe any opportunities to serve.

Your comments and questions are welcome at the DRWD mailbox: FEMA-DRWD-Program@dhs.gov.

You May Have Heard . . .

Admiral Johnson announced at the Cadre Managers' Workshop in March the creation of a 2-year CORE cadre management position in each of the 10 FEMA Regions. Headquarters staff is working with the Regions on the position descriptions. The vacancies will be advertised on www.fema.gov, and www.usajobs.com.

DRWD: What's Behind the Curtain

By Philip Nowak, Deputy Director DRWD

Throughout this issue of "On Call" you see a myriad of information about the new Disaster Reserve Workforce Division (DRWD). The obvious question for you, the disaster reservist, is "when do I see results." Let me take you behind the curtain.

DRWD is part of the Office of Management, where we work with counterparts in the Human Capital Division and the agency's other key business enterprises. This enhanced visibility and the fact that DRWD is led by a member of the Senior Executive Service strengthen the office's ability to advocate for the resources and policies which will

sustain the Reservist Program over the long-term.

After numerous studies over the last decade, all of which identified a number of reforms, some of you understandably feel that you have been down this road before.

While skepticism is understandable, there is plenty of room for optimism. At no time in anybody's memory has so much attention by agency leadership been focused on the unique

needs of the disaster reserve workforce.

The bottom line? There will be results that you, the reservist, will notice in the short run, and bigger changes with more impact which most will welcome in the long run. Stay tuned.



Philip A. Nowak,
Deputy Director DRWD

Disaster Reserve Workforce Division Missions

- 1) *Develop, deploy and support a professional disaster reserve workforce ready for the national all-hazards response needs of FEMA program managers and regional leadership.*
- 2) *Assist in the credentialing and deployment of responders from FEMA's full-time workforce and the Surge Capacity Force.*

Your Pay Matters

In January of this year the Human Capital Division (HCD) launched "MyPayMatters" - a single point of contact for all payroll-related issues or inquiries. A dedicated payroll specialist reviews requests and responds within one business day - yes, *one business day!* Their motto? "*Delivering Excellence Every time.*" See for yourself: fema-mypaymatters@fema.gov, phone 866-896-8003, and fax 301-209-4327.

On the Web

- DAE Info Site, Back issues of "On Call" at <http://www.fema.gov/pao/daeinfo.shtm>
- National Travel Web Site at <http://nationaltravelsystems.com/>
- EMI's online Independent Study courses at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/>
- Disaster Workforce task books and online assessment guides at <http://www.learningservices.us/FEMA/TaskBooks/>
- FAQs about the new Disaster Reserve Workforce Division at <http://online.fema.net/announcements/memos/ndes.shtm#fema>