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FEMA

MEMORANDUM FOR: FEMA Regional Administrators
Federal Coordinating Officers
Assistant Administrators, Office of Response and Recovery
Acting Director, Office of External Affairs

FROM: William L. Carwile, III *William L. Carwile, III*
Associate Administrator for Response and
Recovery and Director of Disaster Operations

SUBJECT: Implementation of the National Incident Management
System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS)
during Response and Recovery Operations

As we continue supporting the governors of the states impacted by the unprecedented tornadoes and flooding along the Mississippi River and its tributaries with their ongoing response, recovery and mitigation efforts; additional counties are still being added within the declared states. Substantial FEMA resources are now rapidly flowing into the impacted states and we are compiling recovery estimates. For example, in the large geographic area impacted in the State of Alabama alone, the initial cost estimate for Disaster Relief Funding is now approaching two billion dollars.

In 95 percent of declared disaster responses, we utilize the traditional FEMA functional organization model, employing the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), appropriate Command and General Staff, and program leads to cover a few counties and a limited geographic area. In smaller disaster responses such as these, decisions can be made at the Joint Field Office (JFO) level, in a centralized manner, and this can result in a workable approach. However, for large scale events that include many counties, parishes, or other jurisdictions covering an extensive geographic area, the Unified Coordination Group (UCG) must actively consider adopting an expanded ICS-compliant, organizational structure that provides for more distributed decision-making and coordination.

Adhering to the ICS organizational structure when expanding to meet operational needs, not only facilitates unity of effort, but helps ensure an appropriate span of control ratio. For more information, please review page 5-2 of the Incident Management Handbook (FEMA B-761/Interim) and the organizational structure example it provides. Also, while "County Liaisons" can be a valued addition to the team for providing real time situational awareness, they are not part of the ICS structure nor are they responsible for working with county officials to prioritize and account for federal recourses. For successful outcomes, it is critical that we ensure unity of effort in our operations and avoid creating

“stove piped” or ad hoc field operations that JFO program leads attempt to manage in a centralized manner.

To achieve the greatest success, an ICS-compliant organizational structure requires the following:

- FCO support;
- Knowledgeable Operations Section Chiefs, Branch Directors, and Division Supervisors;
- An appropriate subordinate structure with task forces and strike teams;
- A transparent, complete, and trusted partnership with state counterparts;
- Close working relationships with elected and appointed officials in each jurisdictional area;
- A disciplined approach by the program leads, including Public Assistance, Individual Assistance, External Affairs, and especially Community Relations, in which division supervisors and geographical branch directors are kept informed of deployments of task forces or strike teams, crews, individuals, or other personnel or resources to the geographical areas of responsibility; and
- An effective Incident Action Plan that sets forth achievable objectives, reflects clear work assignments, and provides contact information for all deployed personnel.

In addition to providing a workable span of control and promoting unity of effort, when implemented, adhering to this organizational structure will help ensure that a FEMA leader has knowledge of all FEMA personnel operating in a defined area. A single point of contact reporting through defined channels to the FCO ensures accountability for all FEMA personnel, as well as those from other federal agencies, which is critical when working in remote or complicated environments.

I ask that each of you make sure that you fully understand how implementing the ICS structure will optimize coordination with our state and local partners during large scale events, such as hurricanes and earthquakes, and provide your full support to the FCO's in adopting and using the ICS organizational approach. For your information, attached is a copy of the Draft Operations Section Field Guide that addresses the roles and responsibilities of the Division/Group Supervisor.

Thank you for your continued support in meeting the needs of disaster survivors and helping state, local, and tribal organizations in their disaster response and recovery operations. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional clarification on any aspect of this memorandum.

Attachment

cc:

Administrator

Deputy Administrators

Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS)

Position Description

The following position description for a DIVS is the same as in the Incident Management Handbook (IMH)

Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS) – Division/Group Supervisors report to the OSC or OPBD when activated. The DIVS is responsible for the implementation of the assigned portion of the IAP. They are also responsible for the deployment and supervision of resources within the Division or Group, reporting on the progress of operations, and the status of resources within the Division or Group. Division Supervisors are assigned to a specific geographical area of an incident and Group Supervisors are assigned to accomplish specific programs and functions within the incident (i.e. Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation, Individual Assistance, etc.).

The DIVS is the primary FEMA contact with the county and local emergency managers and serves as a “one-stop shop” for local officials seeking guidance and advice on FEMA/state response and recovery assistance. The DIVS ensures that tactical decisions are carried out and local needs are met efficiently and effectively; coordinates all federal resources within the division; assists local officials with information on FEMA programs; ensures that commodity orders are transmitted to the appropriate place; and monitors commodities received. Primary duties include:

- a. Obtain briefing from supervisor.
- b. Review Common Responsibilities (Chapter 2).
- c. Establish contact with the County Emergency Management Director (EMD), serve as a Point of Contact (POC) between the local jurisdiction and the ERT, and provide advice and assistance regarding federal response resources and processes.
- d. Process essential needs requests for assistance, resources, and personnel from the local jurisdiction.
- e. Implement Incident Action Plan for Division or Group.
- f. Provide copy of Incident Action Plan to assigned personnel.
- g. Attend scheduled meetings with local jurisdictions.
- h. Supervise assigned personnel.
- i. Review assignments and incident activities with subordinates and assign tasks.
- j. Ensure the Resource Unit is advised of all changes in status of resources assigned to the Division or Group.
- k. Coordinate activities with adjacent Divisions or Groups.
- l. Determine need for assistance on assigned tasks.
- m. Submit situation and resources status information to immediate supervisor (Branch Director or Operations Section Chief).
- n. Ensure that assigned personnel and equipment get to and from assignments in a timely and orderly manner.
- o. Resolve logistics problems within the Division or Group.
- p. Participate in the development of operational plans for next operational period. Maintain Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214).

Principles for a Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS)

The primary role of the DIVS is to ensure that efficient communications and coordination bridges are built between local government and the FEMA/State Emergency Response Team (ERT) to ensure life saving, life sustaining, and disaster assistance efforts are as effective and efficient as practical. All actions must be consistent with and support the Incident Objectives and the actions identified in the Incident Action Plan (IAP) for each Operational Period.

The DIVS provides a point of contact for local officials; manages, directs, and coordinates Federal resources in the division to meet the requests and needs of the local entities; and fosters and gains cooperation with and between local entities.

Always remember that we (FEMA/federal government) are only there to support the needs of the state and local entities. We are not there to dictate what they need or take over. Our mission is to facilitate and assist local entities and the state to identify and articulate needs, order requested services and resources, and coordinate and deliver federal resources and programs. You need to be an active participant with the local entities, but you are not a voting member.

A DIVS can be assigned to manage/supervise a geographical (Division) or functional organization (Group). The DIVS may report directly to the Operations Section Chief (OSC) or to an Operations Branch Director (OPBD) on a larger more complex incident.

The intent of identifying these principles, roles, and responsibilities is provide the DIVS with guidance based on experience, lessons learned, and the FEMA Incident Management Handbook (IMH) position description for a DIVS.

External Principles

1. The DIVS functions as the primary contact between the County Emergency Management Director (CEMD) and other key local officials and the FEMA Emergency Response Team (ERT).

It is important to make contact with the CEMD at the earliest opportunity. The CEMD will be your primary contact in the county and all requests for assistance should originate through the CEMD. This should be your initial contact when you get to your division. If possible try to make contact prior to getting to the division. Establish a relationship of trust and make it clear that you are there to assist the CEMD and other local officials.

Some cities may also have an Emergency Management Director or Coordinator, but the CEMD is the lead Emergency Management person in the county.

2. A State counterpart needs to be assigned to the division.

Having a state counterpart will increase your effectiveness considerably. Normally the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) and State Coordinating Officer (SCO) will have established a Unified Command to manage the incident and it is common practice to have federal/state counterparts at the Command and General Staff positions including the Operations Section Chief (OSC). A weakness to date has been the lack of a state counterpart at both the Branch and Division level.

The importance of having a state counterpart at the Division level is that this is where the requests for assistance originate. The request sequence is that local government requests assistance from the State beyond their own capabilities and the State passes on the requests that are beyond the State's capabilities to FEMA. As often as not these requests are communicated up the line by various sources and often there is confusion and delay in identifying, approving, and responding to the requests. The intent is to have a unified State/FEMA operation from division to branch to the operations section

Another reason the State needs to be aware of all requests for assistance coming from local government is the state may be obligated to pay a portion of the costs or may already have the capability to provide what is needed at the local level.

If the State is unable or unwilling to provide a DIVS, establish a point of contact and method of communication for requests from within the division to the state.

3. Work with local entities to develop a unified approach within the division.

You are unlikely to be successful if each local entity within your division identifies and sets priorities independently. It is extremely important to have a unified approach to addressing common problems by agreeing to objectives, priorities, and sharing scarce resources. Work, facilitate, and coordinate with local entities to develop a unified approach within the division so that participating local entities speak with one voice and have a single set of priorities.

This can be done a number of ways, but use of the "Incident Command System (ICS)" is recommended. Many local entities will likely have experience in using the ICS for an incident and can be implemented rather easily. Where local entities do not have experience it may be a little more difficult, but the advantage of using the ICS principles and the local entities gaining an understanding of how the incident is organized at the branch and state level (operations section) will be worth it.

In addition, you will find that when using ICS in a unified approach to identify and analyze issues and develop objectives and priorities that some items/issues can be resolved with personnel and resources on hand. Remember this may be the first time the local entity(s) have really worked together as a unified command or decision making entity.

You should beware of individual(s) within an entity(s) pushing their individual issues and priorities. If you act on individual input that has not been considered and approved by the local unified command/decision group you will lose your credibility and their support.

Strongly encourage the local entities to match their operational period with the operational period of the State/FEMA Incident Action Plan (IAP). This will simplify the planning process and assist you in identifying and ordering personnel and resources needed by the local entities within the scheduled time frames established for the incident.

4. Input local government priorities into the FEMA/State action planning process.

Local government's identification of needs is critical to their accomplishing their priority incident objectives. Provide timely input of the local government's needs/requirements for supplies, equipment or personnel into the FEMA/State action planning process for inclusion in the IAP for the next operation period either directly or via conference call.

The incident objectives, priorities, and strategies are set by the Unified Command (FCO/SCO) to ensure that the critical issues are considered and addressed. The Operations Section is tasked to develop tactical actions to accomplish these incident objectives. Branch Directors and Division/Group Supervisors need to provide tactical input to the operational action planning process that supports those objectives. This planning process culminates in the listing of the actions and resources needed to affect these tactics identified for the division in the IAP.

It is important for the DIVS to provide timely input to the development of the IAP for the next operational period. Analyze the division to determine whether you have the number and type of personnel and resources to needed to complete the division tasks planned for the next operational period. Be prepared to provide accurate and concise information into the action planning process. Timely input of divisional needs into the action planning process is critical to ensure supplies, resources and personnel are identified and provided for in the next operational period IAP.

Ensure that all personnel, including local entities and supporting agencies, receive a copy of the IAP for the operational period and conduct a briefing at the beginning of each operation period.

Advise the Resource Unit of any divisional changes, corrections and updates to personnel, resources, and activities each operational period and inform the Resource Unit of any other corrections to and problems with the IAP.

Coordinate activities as appropriate/needed with adjacent divisions and if time permits visit adjacent divisions and share personnel and resources as necessary to accomplish the actions in the IAP.

Report accomplishments for each operational period to the OPBD/OSC and/or the Planning Section. This can be done several ways, but a fast, efficient method is to make notes on the current Operational Period Division Assignment List (ICS-204).

Note: It has not been established at this time, but the preference would be that accomplishments be reported to the Planning Section which would compile the accomplishments for the operational period.

5. The DIVS is the primary “information pipeline” from the local scene to the JFO.

The need for timely, accurate on-scene information is significant throughout the response phase of an incident. A primary responsibility of the DIVS is to obtain and transmit this information to the Branch Director/Operations Section Chief.

During the initial phase of an incident, life saving and life sustaining personnel and resources are needed and take priority over FEMA and Supporting Agency programs. These needs must be identified by and obtained from the local entity(s) and ordered/transmitted up through the action planning process (see #4 above). You in turn should provide the local unified command/decision group with the best information you have on the kind, amount, and types of resources and commodities available and/or allocated to the division for the next operational period(s).

Order the commodities and other resources identified by the unified command/decision group each operational period by inputting them into the Operational Action Planning Process for delivery the next operational period. It is also essential to track what is actually received as well as where and when it is delivered. Then, to complete the accountability loop, compare what was received against what was requested

Coordinate with your State counter part to prevent duplicate orders. Monitor the local burn rate to ensure supplies are not building up or are not also being acquired from other sources. During the response phase of an incident, processing and receiving critical supplies is an important and time consuming job of the DIVS.

Although ordering commodities and resources and planning inputs are very important pieces of the information needed it is far from all that is needed or will be requested. You will be barraged by requests for information especially from various program leads/specialists that have a need for good information to assist in the action planning process. There is not a good system for managing these requests at this time so you will have to set priorities on how and when you respond. One test of when to respond is whether or not it is within the chain of command or within pre-approved protocols.

6. Make attendance at local meetings a priority.

You are the key FEMA official in your division. Attending scheduled and non-scheduled meetings is important for acquiring and sharing information, and critical for gaining the confidence of the local unified command/decision group. Conflicting meetings will occur, but you must make attending these meetings a priority.

When a conflict is unavoidable send a representative to the meeting(s). If conflicts are common it may indicate a need for a Deputy.

7. Introduce and explain FEMA programs to local entities in coordination with the State.

The multiple FEMA programs and numbers of personnel involved can overwhelm the local entities. You are in the best position to prepare, inform, educate and facilitate the local entities to handle the array of FEMA programs. FEMA's programs need to be coordinated and blend in with the objectives/priorities of local government. It should be kept in mind that the timing of these programs may vary between divisions on the same incident.

Assist them with planning for program implementation such as:

- Preparing them for Public Assistance and Mitigation applicant briefings and kick off meetings,
- Assisting them with determining Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) locations,
- Opening and operating Disaster Recovery Centers,
- Need and placement of Community Relations personnel, and
- Coordination of the debris removal program.

The DIVS should have at least a general knowledge of FEMA programs such as Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, Mitigation, Community Relations and Public Affairs. If you are not familiar with these programs get an early start on developing the appropriate contact with the program specialists and/or request program specialists as needed.

Keeping current on changes and interpretations of program policies

It is also important to keep current with program interpretations and changes. During large, complex incidents changes to agency policy based on the situation or event is not uncommon and requires an explanation or clarification of policy. These changes should be documented in the IAP and communicated to the DIVS in the operational briefing by the Operations Section Chief.

Keeping assigned personnel familiar with FEMA programs or how to obtain program information.

As a DIVS assigned to a geographic division, you will be supervising personnel implementing FEMA programs such as Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, Mitigation, and Community Relations. These programs are technical in nature and you and your staff will need assistance from program specialists. In addition, changes in and interpretations of agency policy may occur during the course of operations which may require assistance from program specialists. You and members of your staff will need to maintain contact with these program leads to effectively and efficiently carry out the functions in these programs.

These program leads/specialists will be invaluable in assisting you implement these programs. In addition, they will be putting out information regarding specifics of program details that will also assist you and your staff.

As DIVS you will gather and transmit information from local government on their issues, needs, and priorities as they relate to each of the FEMA programs

Note: At this time FEMA does not have many trained DIVS and will probably have to reach out to other agencies such as the wildland fire agencies for these positions. Since these personnel will not have adequate knowledge of FEMA programs it will be necessary to provide them assistance and put some effort into their training in this area.

Over time FEMA will develop a cadre of qualified DIVS. Position training will need to include at least familiarization of applicable FEMA programs.

8. Responding the news media.

The local (and sometimes national) news media are going to press you to make a comment on a situation or policy. It will not always work for you to direct them to a Joint Information Center which in most cases will be a significant distance from your area. Some options are:

- If possible, defer the news media to the local entity(s) spokesperson. The local entities may also have a public information group formed.
- In some situations the local spokes person may not be available and/or the press will want to hear from "FEMA" and you may be forced to provide an interview. When interviewed provide only known factual information in as brief a statement as possible. Listen to the questions carefully and only answer what is asked with known facts. If you do not know, tell them you do not know.

- If the media workload warrants, request an Information officer be assigned to the division.

9. Make it clear to all that you represent FEMA.

As a DIVS you may be a supporting agency employee mission assigned to the disaster. As such, you may wear your agency uniform which is appropriate, but you are representing FEMA on this assignment and you should make that very clear to the local entity or local Entities.

Internal Principles

10. Obtain a briefing from your supervisor and conduct divisional briefings of at least daily.

Obtain an entrance briefing from your supervisor and provide an exit briefing. Try to have both briefings face to face.

- Discuss the planning process and meeting schedule.
- Ensure you have an understanding of your Supervisor's expectations.
- Obtain a copy of the IAP.
- Invite your supervisor to visit the division.
- Inform your supervisor of your knowledge level of FEMA and Supporting Agencies programs.
- Request a performance evaluation.

Also keep your immediate supervisor informed on tactical actions needed to complete assignments in the IAP. This requires you to continually assess staffing levels and evaluate the capability to complete assignments.

Provide a daily Operations Briefing of the IAP for all FEMA, State and Local personnel to ensure an understanding of planned activities for the operational period. When practical conduct this briefing face to face as it is a better way to distribute information and answer questions, but travel times may dictate it be done by conference call. This briefing should include supporting agencies and local entities and is a good time for questions.

Division staff may need to be educated in the action planning process and how incident objectives and operational period tasks are developed and then articulated in the IAP. Actions taken by division personnel should be consistent with IAP incident objectives and direction shown on the Division Assignment List (ICS-204).

You should also provide a briefing to all incoming personnel.

11. Identify and procure sufficient office space for your operation.

Identify sufficient office space to house appropriate State, Other Supporting Agency, and FEMA Personnel assigned to the division. This should include sufficient room for operational briefings. Timely and effective operations can not be effected without adequate office space. In some cases local government may be able to provide such a site; however, in other situations they may not have adequate office space available and it will be necessary to procure office facilities through normal FEMA/GSA leasing processes.

12. Manage and supervise assigned personnel.

Whether geographic or functional, the DIVS manages all personnel and resources within the area or function. This includes signing time and attendance sheets and travel vouchers (when given signature authority), making daily assignments, conducting briefings, dealing with and resolving performance and conduct issues, identifying the need for additional personnel, identifying excess personnel, providing logistical support arrangements, and making performance evaluations.

When personnel report directly to the Division without prior check-in, the DIVS is responsible for checking that person in and relaying this information to the Resource Unit in the Planning Section.

Inappropriate Behavior can be a problem when you are supervising personnel, who are working 7 days a week with very long hours under stress. Be aware of problem indicators and remind personnel working in the Division as to what is acceptable behavior and what is not

Subordinate supervisors must be held accountable for all aspects of leadership, supervision, and management of personnel and resources assigned to their division.

As DIVS review and visit assigned working areas to ensure safe practices are being used. Require subordinate supervisors to provide safety briefing on activities. Require these supervisors to have the same role with their subordinates as you do with them.

Visit sites where work is being done by FEMA/Supporting Agencies within the division and when practical include other members of the local unified command/decision group, FEMA personnel, and supporting agency personnel on these site visits.

Coordinate activities as appropriate/needed with adjacent DIVS and if time permits visit adjacent divisions and share personnel and resources as necessary to accomplish the actions in the IAP.

13. Maintain an acceptable span of control (2-7).

It is incumbent on the DIVS to ensure the division organizational structure maintains a manageable span of control (2-7). If your span of control exceeds the recommended number, work with your supervisor to bring it back into conformance.

Both disaster responses that have been organized geographically (Ivan and Katrina in Mississippi) were large, complex incidents and the resources allocated to the divisions exceeded the span of control parameters. Manageable span of control is needed to ensure adequate supervision and sufficient communication which is critical during life threatening/life saving event.

14. The DIVS needs to be included in all conference calls for FEMA that impact the programs within their division.

The DIVS should be advised of any conference calls that involve the division and given the opportunity to participate to be aware of actions that affect operations, gain technical information, answer questions, and provide local priorities and issues.

Currently programs have conference calls to provide program coordination, but the DIVS have not been included. The DIVS needs to be included as you are working with the local entities, are responsible for activities within the division, and are able to provide insight and priorities from the local entities.

15. Work directly with the appropriate logistics personnel to resolve equipment, supplies and office space issues.

As the DIVS position is fairly new to FEMA, making contact with logistics and getting things done will be a challenge at times. Keep your supervisor apprised of logistical needs and issues, but work with logistics directly to resolve issues, unless directed otherwise. Keep the number of people in your division in contact with logistics to as few as possible. It is best to have only one point of contact within the division for logistics.

16. Maintain Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214).

It is a requirement that a DIVS complete a Unit Log (ICS-214) for each operational period and to file a copy with the documentation unit leader at the end of the operational period. This is easier said than done as Unit Logs may not be available on the incident. It is advisable to keep a personal log (beginning at deployment) of events, meetings, personal issues and political contacts for personal reference throughout the operational period and summarize on the ICS-214 for the records.

Make your expectations clear to assigned personnel on review of the unit logs and how you want the routing of the unit logs to the Documentation Unit.

Response and Recovery Operations in Disaster Management

Disaster management activities are identified primarily as response and recovery with the National Response Plan (NRP) definitions being:

Response: Activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Response activities include immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs as well as the execution of emergency operations plans and of incident mitigation activities designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and other unfavorable outcomes.

As indicated by the situation, response activities include lessening the effects or consequences of an incident; increased security operations; continuing investigations into the nature and source of the threat; ongoing public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and specific law enforcement operations aimed at preempting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity, and apprehending actual perpetrators and bringing them to justice.

Some examples of Response activities are:

1. Life saving,
 - a. Search and Rescue
 - b. Medical care
 - c. Evacuation
 - d. Road clearing/debris removal for access
 - e. Elderly care and/or transportation
2. Life Sustaining
 - a. Providing Initial Response Resources (IRR) such as water, ice, MREs, generators, cots, blankets, tarps, blue roof materials, etc.,
 - b. Siting and installation of generators,
 - c. Sheltering, including feeding, showers, laundry, etc. (humans and animals)
 - d. Emergency debris removal
 - e. Donations
 - f. Support to Response Personnel

Recovery: The development, coordination, and execution of service- and site-restoration plans for impacted communities and the reconstitution of government operations and services through individual, private-sector, nongovernmental, and public assistance programs that: identify needs and define resources; provide housing and promote restoration; address long-term care and treatment of affected persons; implement additional measures for community restoration; incorporate mitigation measures and techniques, as feasible; evaluate the incident to identify lessons learned; and develop initiatives to mitigate the effects of future incidents.

Some examples of Recovery Operations are:

1. Public Assistance
 - a. Debris removal
 - b. Temporary buildings
 - c. Bridge and road repair

2. Individual Assistance
 - a. Temporary housing
 - b. Transitional housing assistance
 - c. Blue Roof Program
 - d. Other Needs Assistance
 - e. Other services, such as, Crisis Counseling, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Legal Services, and Special Tax Considerations
3. Mitigation

Response Operations (Life Saving and Life Sustaining Activities)

Response Operations (life saving and life sustaining activities) are authorized under Section 403 of the The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §5121 *et seq.* (Rules, policies, and procedures are included in CFR 44, Part 206, Subpart C, Emergency Assistance, 206.61-206.67).

Emergency Assistance is authorized and funded under the Public Assistance program and is identified as “Emergency Work” in Chapter ___, Public Assistance in this document. An applicant normally has to have all this work done within six (6) months of the declared disaster.”

The two (2) categories of work considered to be Emergency Work are:

Category A – Debris Removal – Mainly Public Property (See Section on Debris Removal)

Category B – Emergency Protective Measures are actions taken by Applicants before, during, and after a disaster to save lives, protect public health and safety, and prevent damage to public and private property. (See Section on Emergency Protective Measures)

The two (2) emergency work categories (A and B) are normally included (approved) in the initial disaster declaration and are normally reimbursed at 100% for a specified amount of time.

Life saving and life sustaining activities will always be a high priority incident objective in the early phases of a catastrophic incident response as will be the safety of Response Personnel. In the early stages of a disaster life saving and life sustaining activities will take precedence over Recovery activities. However, there often is not a clear cut difference between Response and Recovery activities. In most incidents they run together and overlap. For example, often recovery activities such as debris removal, blue roof, and temporary housing may be beginning while response activities are still being conducted. In fact, debris removal can be a response activity (clearing roads to gain access or removing debris that poses a hazard to public safety) or a recovery operation (normal debris removal). It is not all that important to differentiate between response and recovery; however, it is important you need to have a general understanding of what may be meant when these terms are used.

FEMA is not involved in the response phase of all declared disasters. Often the state and local entities handle the response phase with FEMA conducting a preliminary damage assessment (PDA) and the subsequent recovery phase if the disaster is declared by the president.

On those disasters where FEMA is involved in the response phase, such as a hurricane, the response activities will take priority over the recovery activities until such time as recovery activities can be conducted without affecting/interfering with the response operations. The priority for Response Operations does not preclude the implementation of Recovery operations if the Response Operations have reduced down to a low level of need and there are adequate resources to do both, but the DIVS must be prepared to set priorities between Response/Recovery Operations.

Priority Setting: Priorities for resources and services must be set in coordination with the local entities (city, town, county, etc.) of the Division through an action planning process and then communicated up through the Operations Branch Director (OPBD)/Operations Section Chief (OSC) for consideration in the development of the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

The Response phase of a catastrophic incident will be a very stressful on all personnel – both the local entities and other response personnel in the Division. Requested resources will often be limited and the time needed to get the resources will most likely take longer than requested. The DIVS must be prepared to provide accurate information during this time without setting unrealistic expectations for local entities and response personnel. It is also important during this period of time to be visible and accessible to the local entities/decision group. Quickly developing a relationship with the local entities/governments will help develop a level of credibility. Visibility, management, oversight and monitoring of response operations and personnel in the Division will help provide credibility to operations within the Division.

Planning: Life saving and life sustaining tasks within the Division can be challenging, complex, and time sensitive. Use the incident action planning process to develop future operations rather reacting to each crisis. Work with the local entities to organize the planning process, set a meeting and briefing schedule, and identify meeting attendees. Emphasize the importance of this process to the local entities as the best way to be effective and get their input into the incident action planning process.

The specifics of how the DIVS is involved in the action planning process for the incident will probably vary from incident to incident, but at a minimum the DIVS should ensure that her/his immediate supervisor receives the priorities and needs as identified by the local entities in time to be considered in the development of the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

Managing and Tracking Resources: The local entity may direct, manage, and/or distribute the resources provided by the Federal government, but quite often FEMA will need to play a role in the management of these resources. As DIVS it is your responsibility to work with the local entities to assist in identifying needed resources, ensure their request for the resources is processed, and provide operational direction to the resource, if requested/needed. The local entity may be able to provide full support to a very limited support and request FEMA's assistance for help out side the local capability.

Regardless of who is managing/directing the resource the DIVS is responsible for checking them in and maintaining their status. This is a big job and may require several people (Check-in/Status Recorders are trained to do this) to assist the DIVS in this effort. The DIVS is also responsible for providing the status of resources in the Division to the Resource Unit in the Planning Section. Resource status information will include the length of time on the incident, staffing (names, position titles, contact information, etc.), location (including reassignment), evaluations, problems and recognition.

Life Saving Activities take precedent in priority over all other activities and include:

Evacuation: Evacuation is the removal of people and animals from a hazardous area prior to the disaster occurring and is the responsibility of local law enforcement. Normally FEMA is not involved, as evacuation is usually effected prior to the declared disaster, but the DIVS needs to be aware of this activity and pass on local jurisdiction requests for assistance. Some examples of potential requests could be for buses to move people, shelters to house evacuees until they can be relocated, additional law enforcement personnel to assist in contacting potential evacuees or protecting evacuated areas from looting, etc. Either way it is a local law enforcement responsibility and any FEMA involvement would be strictly support.

The removal of people and animals after the declared disaster is normally considered “search and rescue” although at times it may be referred to as “evacuation.” The groups of people can be the elderly, have special medical needs, and the general public. The evacuation method will be determined by whether it is an evacuation from land or water. The involvement of FEMA in evacuations will be varied and depended on the local capability.

Several Emergency Support Functions (ESF) may be involved in evacuations such as the ESF #1 (Department of Transportation) to acquire transportation; FEMA and the ESF #6 (Red Cross) for mass care; ESF #8 (Department of Health and Human Service) to assess public health and medical needs, public health surveillance, medical care, medical equipment and supplies, and veterinary and animal health support; and the ESF #11 (Food and Nutrition Service) to provide appropriate food supplies, if requested.

Note: Reference the Emergency Support Function (ESF) Annex in the National Response Plan (NRP) for more information on the ESFs.

Search and Rescue operations are commonly needed in the early stages of a disaster response. ESF #9 – Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) rapidly deploys components of the National US&R Response System to provide specialized life-saving assistance. FEMA is the ESF #9 Coordinator and the Primary Agency. As such, FEMA activates and deploys US&R teams which are considered federal assets under the Stafford Act.

Although they are FEMA/Federal assets the US&R teams are normally assigned to the requesting local jurisdiction for coordination, assignment and direction to meet their needs.

The US&R system includes 28 task forces sponsored by State and local government emergency response organizations. US&R also has Incident Support Teams (IST) that provide coordination, operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administration support to the US&R task forces immediately upon deployment. Re-supply is provided only after their initial 72-hours of deployment. Contact Logistics when and if ESF #9 assets request the Division to assist with logistical support of a task force(s).

Aviation assets for Search and Rescue could come from the Coast Guard, the Military, other federal agencies, or contractors.

Note: See the Chapter 16 of the Incident Management Handbook and the ESF #9 Annex of the NRP for more detailed information.

Medical Assistance: Local entities may also need medical assistance which could range from First Aid Station/Emergency Medical Clinics to fully functional field hospitals. Whatever the level of need requested, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS - ESF #8) will assess the need and provide for the service either by utilizing its own internal assets (U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps) or medical assets from ESF #8 supporting agencies such as the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), the Department of Defense (DOD), or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

NDMS Teams include:

1. **Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT)** which includes approximately 35 members. Team capabilities include triage and stabilization of patients and the provision of austere medical services.
2. **Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT)** that provide mortuary services,
3. **Veterinary Medical Assistance Team (VMAT)** that provide veterinary services,
4. **National Nursing Response Team (NNRT)** that will be available for situations specifically requiring nurses – and not a full DMAT.
5. **National Pharmacy Response Team (NPRT)** that will be used in situations such as those described for the NNRT, but where pharmacists, not nurses or a DMAT, are needed.
6. **National Medical Response Team (NMRT)** that are equipped and trained to provide medical care for potentially contaminated victims of weapons of mass destruction.

The DIVS will have very little day to day involvement with medical facilities and personnel, but has a responsibility to track them as a resource and should be to be aware of their mobilization and use. Medical resources will be shown on the Division Assignment Sheet (ICS 204).

Note: For additional information on medical assistance assets and operations see Chapter __ Emergency Support Functions in this document, Chapter 16 of the IMH, and the ESF #8 Annex of the NRP.

Life Sustaining Activities: Although Life Saving activities take precedence over all other activities whenever resources are limited the practicality is that usually a mix of activities are occurring simultaneously not only because there are adequate resources to do multiple jobs, but also that some resources are trained and or equipped to conduct life saving activities. Life sustaining activities are also a high priority and will normally be going on at the same time as life saving activities.

Life sustaining tasks will also be carried out by agencies (usually Federal) mission assigned or tasked by FEMA. FEMA has contracts in place prior to disaster events with suppliers set to provide many life sustaining personnel and supplies.

Initial Response Resources (IRR) are disaster support commodities that may be pre-staged, in anticipation of an event, at a Federal facility (Mobilization Center) close proximity to a disaster area (out of the threat zone) for immediate use on in response to the disaster. IRRs are provided to victims and all levels of government responders immediately after a disaster occurs. They are designed to augment State and local capabilities. FEMA HQ Logistics Division stores and maintains critically needed initial response commodities and pre-positions supplies and equipment when and where required. IRR include supplies (baby food, baby formula, blankets, cots, diapers, ice, meals ready-to-eat, plastic sheeting, tents, tarps, blue roofing materials and water) and equipment (emergency generators, industrial ice makers, mobile kitchens and kits, portable potties with service, portable showers, and refrigerated vans).

The local entities may request other supplies and equipment, but the IRR items listed above cover most of what will be needed. In addition to having quantities of the above items in stock FEMA has contracts or agreements with private vendors and the Department of Defense for rapid supply and re-supply.

Food, Ice, and Water (Commodities): Often during the early stages of a disaster, there will be a need to provide food (MREs – Meals Ready to Eat), ice, and water to affected people particularly those in areas that have experienced a loss of electrical power. The local entities will request these commodities through the State to FEMA. These IRR items are mentioned separately as they constitute the largest volume and require the most management and effort to distribute down to the user. The DIVS will be actively involved in the planning, ordering, tracking and distribution of the commodities in the Division.

These commodities will normally be stock piled in a Federal Operations Staging Area (FOSA) from which they will be distributed to Points of Distribution (POD). In some instances commodities may move from a FOSA to a State Staging Area and then distributed to the PODs.

The State/County Staging Areas and local PODs are normally operated by the state, the County Emergency Management Director (EMD), or a combination thereof. Quite often the bulk of the personnel will be from the National Guard. In some instances the state and local EMD may not have adequate personnel to staff and operate these distribution facilities and may want to request assistance from FEMA. This can be done and FEMA will either directly hire personnel or mission assign another agency to provide personnel to manage or assist in the management of these distribution facilities; however, a better alternative is for the State or local entity to hire local people for this work. This provides jobs for local people and the state and/or county will be reimbursed through the Public Assistance Program, usually 100% during the early phases of the disaster.

If FEMA takes on the management of these facilities, whether through local hires or mission assignment the DIVS or representative will need to work with the State and County representatives to assist in establishing a centralized staging area for commodities (if needed) and to identify PODs, staffing needs, hours of operation, public information and distribution protocols.

Whether or not the State and local entities are managing and operating the distribution facilities the DIVS will be responsible for ensuring the commodity needs identified and requested by the local entities are entered into (passed onto the Operations Branch Director or Section Chief) and considered in the action planning process. Although the local entities in the Division may not receive all of the commodities requested due to shortages or higher priority areas they won't get anything if it isn't entered into the planning process.

The DIVS will need to track resources received into the Division down to the POD. This will normally be done by a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE – ESF #3) Commodities Planning and Response Team (PRT), but if for some reason they are not available the DIVS will need to request personnel to do this. The USACE Commodities PRT will not only track the commodities to the POD level, but will also collect the necessary paper work from the truck drivers to ensure proper payment. The USACE PRT will deliver the paper work back to the USACE Commodities Mission Manager at the FOSA and report the appropriate numbers to the DIVS for reporting to the Resource Unit in the Planning Section.

The DIVS also needs to analyze and monitor the burn rate of each of the commodities. The USACE PRT is a good resource to assist in this effort.

Note: For more information on commodity management and the role of the USACE see Chapter 10 of the IMH and the section on this USACE in this document.

Temporary Emergency Power: The loss of electrical power during a catastrophic event is almost a given. The Temporary Emergency Power Mission is mission assigned to the USACE who deploys one or more Emergency Power PRTs and Prime Power Technical Assistance Teams (Prime Power). Prime Power normally deploys several days before an anticipated disaster and assesses the potential need for generators. When the disaster has been declared by the president, Prime Power continues to make site assessments to determine the size of generator needed and any other installation needs. The Emergency Power PRTs install generators by priorities set by the State (based on priority input by local entities).

Prime Power and the Emergency PRTs normally work out of a FOSA where FEMA delivers the generators. Generators are usually shipped in “50 packs” ranging from 10kW to 125 kW in size. Larger generators are ordered separately.

Prime Power and the Emergency Power PRTs will maintain constant communication with the local power companies as they will be working to get power back on line ASAP. Once electrical power has been restored, generators will no longer be needed and the need for food, water, and ice will diminish rather quickly except where the devastation has been significant such as the Gulf Coast in Mississippi during Hurricane Katrina..

The DIVS involvement will be limited to coordination with the County EMD/local decision makers to identifying where generators are needed, the priority for installation, and getting these priorities into the action planning process. High priorities for generator installation are hospitals, water and sewage pumping stations, emergency response dispatch centers, etc.

Private homes and businesses are not eligible for these generators so the sooner the power is restored the fewer commodities will be needed. Individuals with “special (medical) needs” can be provided small generators (< 10 kW) that are part of the IRR supply and ordered separately from the larger generators referenced above and do not need technical personnel to install and operate. These generators are stored at the FOSA and can be ordered for allocation within the Division similar to other commodities.

Emergency Mass Care & Emergency Sheltering: The need for emergency mass care and emergency sheltering for evacuees and victims can be a significant activity within the Division. ESF #6 – Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services is responsible for the coordination of Federal assistance in support of non-medical mass care services such as shelter, feeding, emergency first aid, disaster welfare information, and bulk distribution of relief items to meet urgent needs.

FEMA and the Red Cross are the primary agencies for ESF #6. FEMA is the ESF #6 Coordinator, but local and State government, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Faith Based Groups, and other Voluntary Organizations will operate the shelters and support facilities.

Note: Voluntary Agencies (VOLAG) are extremely important and helpful to people adversely affected by a disaster. They are the backbone of the emergency assistance effort and provide emergency shelters and assistance when a disaster is anticipated (e.g., hurricane or severely hot/cold weather) or soon after an occurrence (e.g., earthquake, tornado, flood). Such assistance includes:

- Mass care (meals, beds, and comfort kits in mass shelter facilities)
- Medicine,
- Clothing,
- Transient accommodations,
- Health care,
- Cleaning supplies, and
- Other assistance as needed

This assistance is provided, as needed, whether or not the emergency or disaster receives a declaration by the President. If the President does declare a major disaster that includes IA, the VOLAGs closely coordinate the transition of assistance they provide to that provided by FEMA. This is often done without the disaster victim knowing such a transition has occurred. Therefore, FEMA considers VOLAG assistance provided in the disaster assistance delivery sequence.

It is important for the DIVS and staff to give adequate attention to the needs of the VOLAGs operating within the Division.

See the section on VOLAGs in Chapter __ Individual Assistance.

Shelter facilities could be temporary camps, public facilities, such as a school or community center, churches, motels, and in some instances a cruise ship. Shelters are often located in different areas. Some in the heavily damaged areas, some within the less damaged area of the disaster, and some totally removed from the disaster. Evacuees of Hurricane Katrina were sheltered throughout the United States. The DIVS will only be concerned with the shelters located within the Division.

Normally the voluntary organization will take care of all the needs of the shelter inhabitants; however, during a catastrophic event they may need other support such mobile kitchens, showers, laundry units, portable toilets, tents, cots, blankets, food, ice, and water. Any requests for these items have to go through the State just like any other request for Federal assistance.

As with many activities the DIVS will not have a great deal of direct contact with shelters or shelter operations. The DIVS does need to ensure that shelter needs identified by local government are included in the action planning process, that shelter operations are coordinated with ESF #6, and that assigned resources and commodities are tracked and status is transmitted to the Resource Unit in the Planning Section.

If contract equipment such as kitchens, showers, portable toilets, laundry units, refrigerated trucks, fork lifts etc. are assigned within the Division the DIVS should request an adequate number of Contract Officers Technical Representatives (COTR) to track and maintain status on these items and to contract management and oversight for the Contracting Officer. When contract equipment is not tracked and managed a myriad of problems occur regarding adequacy of service, payments, and quite often it is moved to some other location without

notification. During Hurricane Katrina some of the Mississippi contract equipment disappeared and was finally found in Louisiana.

Emergency Sheltering as implemented in the Hurricane Katrina response is unique and can take several forms such as a cruise ship, apartment rental, travel trailers, mobile homes, etc. It is unique in the fact that extenuating circumstances must be present before it is used. Temporary housing assistance (Section 408) is the normal process for this benefit.

The differences between Emergency sheltering and Temporary housing assistance are primarily that reimbursement for temporary housing requires an inspection of the residence and Housing Assistance status has been established – this is not needed or waived for emergency sheltering. The cost of temporary housing counts against the Consideration for reimbursement by FEMA cannot be made until after an inspection has been completed and Housing Assistance status has been established. The cost of temporary housing is included in the calculation of total benefits for which the applicant may be eligible – emergency sheltering does not count against the cap. Consequently, there must be extraordinary circumstances to extend emergency sheltering to include the more semi-permanent facilities shown above.

Emergency sheltering which involves travel trailers and mobile homes involves a significant workload - identifying priorities for facilities, assessing sites, and installation – and will require the attention of the DIVS. The details of this operation are not included here as the use of this option for the Hurricane Katrina response was unique and there are a number of issues that must be addressed to develop an operational procedure.

Bulk Distribution refers to the distribution of emergency relief items to meet urgent needs through sites established within the affected area. These sites are used to coordinate mass care food, water, and ice requirements, and distribution systems, such as donations.

Donations can be a source of problems as quite often they arrive as a truck load of miscellaneous items from used clothing and household goods to food and water which in many situations no one wants to deal with in the confusion of the minute. Donations will come to the local entity in a variety of methods, requiring the time, energy and coordination of the donations and can take a lot of time during critical life sustaining phase of an incident. Avoiding the issue will cause a drain of valuable time at critical interagency meeting, appearance that FEMA has lack of appreciation for the benevolence of donators, and the appearance of unfair treatment and distribution. The DIVS's assistance in the coordination of this issue can be another step in developing credibility with the local entities.

The DIVS must work with the VOLAGs and local entities to develop a credible method to accomplish an equitable system to distribute donated goods. Remember that this is a VOLAG task and they can and should be the lead in the efficient and fair distribution of contributed supplies.

Debris Removal will be a major job after a catastrophic event such as a significant hurricane. Debris removal will be part of the life saving activities in the form of clearing debris from roadways to facilitate emergency life saving response resources access into the area and removal of debris considered hazardous to public health. Most of this will be done by the State and local entities in the early stages of the response. This activity is covered under Category A and will normally qualify for a 100% reimbursement for a specified amount of time.

Note: General debris removal not associated with life saving/sustaining is also covered under Category A, but will usually require the state and/or local entity to share in the cost of the activity. Standard cost share is 75% Federal and 25% State/local, but this share in some instances ratio is adjusted to increase the Federal share.

The State and local entities have the option of doing the job with their own employees, contracting to do the job, or request FEMA to do the job. If FEMA is requested to do the job they will normally mission assign the USACE (ESF #3) to do the job. The USACE will then assess the situation and let contracts to do the work. In some instances FEMA may mission also mission assign the U.S. Forest Service (USFS – ESF #4) to provide hand crews to do debris removal work.

As mentioned earlier debris removal is a large task and will usually go on for a significant amount of time. The DIVS needs to coordinate with the USACE Resident Engineer (Task Force Leader) assigned and the local decision group to ensure that local priorities are met and problems are resolved quickly.

Most debris removal will take place as a Recovery activity. See Chapter ___ of this document and FEMA Public Assistance Guides #321 and #322 for more information.

Facilities for Disaster Workers: On some disasters the local infrastructure needed to support disaster employees (feeding, sleeping, supply, medical, etc.) has been destroyed or damaged to the extent that these services/facilities (motels, restaurants, medical clinics, etc.) are not available to support disaster workers. Under these conditions Logistics will establish and operate Camps to provide the needed services for disaster workers.

The DIVS will not have a need to be involved in the establishment and operation of these Camps, but should be cognizant of where workers assigned to the Division are being supported and look in on their welfare. If the DIVS should bring any concerns about Camp operations to the Camp Manager. If they cannot agree on a solution or requested change in operations the DIVS should then discuss the situation with his/her immediate supervisor (Operations Branch Director or Operations Section Chief)

If the Camp is located within the Division, the DIVS should maintain a higher level of contact and invite the Camp Manager to participate in local planning meetings.

Camps will normally be a last resort to support disaster workers as they are usually more expensive (cost/day/worker) and since camps primarily utilize contractors from outside the local area the use of local facilities puts more money back into the local economy.

The rules on who can utilize a Camp are not always clear so there will probably be some confusion as to the status of contractors and volunteers utilizing Camp facilities. If this occurs press the issue through your immediate supervisor to get clear written policy on who can utilize these facilities.

Recovery Operations

Although Response Operations of life saving and life sustaining occur in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and Recovery Operations will normally occur later, as mentioned earlier there often is not a clear cut difference between Response and Recovery activities and there is not a clear cut line as to when Response Operations cease and Recovery Operations begin. The primary reason for mentioning this here is that although the difference between Response and Recovery Operations are important and there is a time when the incident is considered in the Recovery Stage it is not that important to you as an Operations Branch Director or a Division/Group Supervisor. The sense of urgency is less in Recovery Operations, but the job to coordinate with the local entities to ensure an effective, efficient response to people adversely affected by the disaster remains the same.

A list of Recovery Operations is included at the beginning of this chapter and information on public assistance, individual assistance, and mitigation are included in other chapters of this handbook and are not repeated here.

The Operations Branch Director and DIVS responsibilities in these areas are similar to the Response Operations activities identified above. The primary function of the DIVS in Recovery Operations is to ensure they are consistent with the priorities of the local entities and that the local entities know what is going on. This will require continued involvement and coordination with the local entities, various program leads, and the program personnel in the Division to ensure that activities are planned through the action planning process, field personnel are briefed and tracked, and the accomplishments are documented.

Organizing the Incident Geographically or Functionally

Organizing an incident geographically is relatively new in FEMA operations. It has been used successfully on two recent disasters – Hurricane Ivan in Alabama in 2004 and Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi in 2005. Since operating under the Incident Command System (ICS) in a geographical configuration is new to many FEMA personnel there were problems, some confusion, and some resistance, but over all it appeared to work better than using a functional approach.

FEMA has traditionally organized along functional lines with pre-identified Branches for Human Services, Infrastructure, Mitigation, and Emergency Services. In fact, the newly formed National Emergency Response Teams (ERT-N) include four (4) functional Branch Directors for these program areas.

The primary advantages of organizing an incident geographically as opposed to functionally are:

1. Adds flexibility and expansion capability.

Under ICS the basic sub-division in the Operations Section are divisions (geographical) and Groups (functional). Branches are available to provide the expansion needed to manage “span of control” an ICS management principle that refers to the number of people reporting directly to a supervisor. The ICS recommends that the span of control of any supervisor not exceed seven (7) people.

Consequently, if an incident is divided into more than seven (7) units – divisions and/or groups – the OSC span of control is exceeded. At this time, two (2) or more Branches

could be formed between the OSC and the Division/Group Supervisors to reduce the span of control.

Example – Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi

On the Hurricane Katrina incident in Mississippi operations were broken in three (3) geographical branches and two (2) functional branches.

The geographical branches were:

- a) Branch I – The southern six (6) counties (Each county was a division – 6 divisions),
- b) Branch II - The next two tiers of counties (2 - 5 counties were a division – 6 divisions) and
- c) Branch III - The rest of the counties to the north (5 – 10 counties per division – 7 divisions)

The functional branches were:

- a) Air Operations Branch - All air operations were under this branch.
- b) Long Term Recovery Branch - This branch included the various program areas as Groups which provided support and expertise to the geographical division supervisors and their organizations.

In addition, a Staging Area Coordinator reported to the OSC which made the span of control six (6) instead of (5).

If this incident had been branched functionally there would have been at least five (5) functional branches – Human Services, Infrastructure, Mitigation, Emergency Services, and Air Operations and a Staging Area Coordinator. This would have met the span of control requirements for the OSC, but the four (4) functional/program branches would have had to supervise personnel in at least 19 divisions or groups.

2. Integrated program implementation.

Under a geographical configuration there is one person, the DIVS, coordinating all programs within the division.

Under a functional configuration there are at least four (4) people or groups of people implementing programs within the division. This is if divisions were formed. If divisions were not formed and programs were delivered strictly by county there would be four (4) persons/groups in each county.

Note: Where divisions include more than one county programs are still delivered by county. However, the single coordinating unit (DIVS) versus multiple is still valid.

3. Provides “one stop shopping” for the local officials.

The County Emergency Manager and local officials are not getting bombarded with multiple programs by multiple FEMA representatives. They end up dealing with multiple

FEMA personnel, but only after being coordinated by the DIVS and introduced to the Local Decision Group. County and local officials in both Alabama (IVAN) and Mississippi (Katrina) expressed their preference of this approach.

4. Assures that the local entities are determining their own needs.

With a coordinated planning process and point of contact at the local level it ensures that the Local Decision Group determines their needs, sets priorities, and establishes preferences for physical locations.

5. Improves the unity/chain of command.

There is one person in charge of the division with the responsibility and authority to make things happen and consequently there is one person to hold accountable for what does or does not happen.

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