

The

CORNERSTONE

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

*April 2007***Incident Management Teams trained and ready**

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If a major earthquake about the magnitude of the one in 1906 should strike the San Francisco Bay Area, it would affect much more than the City of San Francisco. Almost 2.5 million people live in the East Bay Counties of Alameda and Contra Costa. These citizens depend on their emergency services to react properly in times of crisis and provide them the help they need. Disasters of this magnitude need a special kind of management team to coordinate and control all the various emergency services.

Fortunately, their fire departments have had the foresight to train many of their officers to immediately deploy Incident Management Teams, specially trained groups which coordinate the emergency response activities involved in a major disaster.

Wildland firefighters have used Incident Management Teams as a means of providing command and control to wildland fires for many years; their adoption to the urban area disasters is a relatively new phenomenon. The Department of Homeland Security calls for the establishment of Incident Management Teams in the country's major metropolitan areas. For-

mally called Type 3 Incident Management Teams (IMT3) they function to provide the command and control capability at large-scale emergency incidents.

Citygate's Training Proposal

Developing and training an IMT challenged Alameda County Fire Chief Sheldon Gilbert, the point man for the Alameda and Contra Costa County Fire Chiefs' Associations on this issue. With their support, Chief Gilbert asked Chief Bill Sager, Senior Associate with Citygate Associates, to develop a training package for the IMTs in the East Bay. Chief Sager, a retired fire chief and former Type 1 Team incident commander, put together a plan with Chief Gilbert that provided the East Bay's fire officers with the training they needed -- and then some. The Department of Homeland Security, through an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant, provided the funding for the program

This comprehensive plan first targeted the need for all the officers to have the appropriate Incident Command System National Curriculum training. This curriculum has three components: basic, intermediate, and advanced ICS. Each level contains a more in-depth education on use of the Incident Command System as needed by increasingly complex assignments at an incident. The fire departments presented this training

in house, as they had their own qualified instructors. All participants received the training they needed.

Once that was complete, Citygate instructors presented training to regional team members in each of the command and general staff positions. These courses prepared the participants to function in their specific command or general staff role, such as Information Officer (command staff) or Planning Section Chief (general staff).

While these IMTs are at the type 3 level, Chiefs Gilbert and Sager decided that the participants would benefit greatly from training at a more advanced level. The participants received the training targeted to the type 2 and 1 level team member. Although this training is more challenging, it provides these teams with a distinct advantage in the event of a major disaster when national type 1 or 2 teams will be in short supply.

"Capstone" Courses Made Them Into "Teams"

Upon completion of the skills training, Citygate instructors presented three "Capstone" courses that tied the entire training program together to develop the participants into teams. These courses were: Command and General Staff Functions in ICS; Command and General Staff; and Incident Commander. Command and

General Staff Functions allowed participants to work in a team environment on each of the component parts of the incident command system. This built a knowledge base of each function for those team members who had not received that specific training. Almost sixty participants completed this course.

Command and General Staff provided participants an opportunity to train together on a real time simulated incident after receiving training on team interaction, communications, and organization. Enthusiasm for this capstone course was so great that participants had T-shirts and hats made up with their simulated team identities. Over 60 participants successfully completed this training.

Finally, selected fire officers attended Incident Commander training. This focused on the members assigned as team incident commanders or those who showed promise as potential incident commanders. Sixteen participants

completed Incident Commander.

The City of Oakland provided funding oversight for the UASI Grant and the Alameda County Fire Department was the lead agency for the logistical support and direction for the training program. Citygate's instructors included both command team qualified active and retired fire officers from state and local agencies.

Over the course of this entire training program, more than 115 members received advanced level ICS training. With their newfound skills, they stand prepared to provide the leadership essential when a disaster strikes; they can promptly fulfill their command and control responsibilities either for their home agency EOCs or as members of a regional team. In the interim, when smaller scale incidents occur, the team members will have the requisite skills to mobilize all or part of their teams to help the citizens of the East Bay.

Course titles: (unless otherwise stated all course were National Wildfire Coordinating IMT 3 Courses. All follow National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) curriculum. The Department of Homeland Security charged NWCG with developing the IMT training.

- I-200 *Basic Incident Command System: Modules 2—6*‡
- I-300 *Intermediate Incident Command System: Modules 7—11*‡
- I-400 *Advance Incident Command System: Modules 12—15*‡
- S-402 *Liaison Officer* California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection course
- S-403 *Information Officer*
- S-404 *Safety Officer*
- S-430 *Operations Section Chief**
- S-440 *Planning Section Chief**
- S-450 *Logistics Section Chief**
- S-460 *Finance/Administration Section Chief**
- R-317 *Command and General Staff Functions in ICS* National Fire Academy course
- S-400 *Incident Commander*
- S-420 *Command and General Staff*

‡ Instructor not provided by Citygate

*Participants in these courses received review of the key subordinate functions their specific sections as well as the section chief training.



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