

CORNERSTONE

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Citygate Supports Metro Teams

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What do forests and subways have in common? At first glance it seems, not much. Nevertheless, if a major emergency, such as a fire in a forest or terrorist attack in a subway occurs, the emergency management organizational structure is the same. It is the Incident Command System, or ICS for short.

When the ICS was first developed, fire managers discovered that using pre-designated Incident Management Teams (IMTs) to manage large fires was more effective than using a pickup squad of people to fill the positions. This should really be no surprise. It is easy to imagine how horribly a regular NFL team would beat a pickup squad, even if all the players were highly talented professional football players.

Incident Management Teams, like their NFL counterparts, consist of highly qualified members assigned to specific positions based on particular skill sets. Each of these individuals can perform competently, but it is the synergy of the team which creates their high degree of effectiveness. This synergy develops

from team training, regular team meetings, and working together on incidents.

Although these teams originally managed wildland fires, public safety experts soon recognized their expertise: they quickly bring together the large organization needed to manage major events. Consequently, their use became both more frequent and diverse, responding to other types of emergencies such as hurricanes, earthquakes, the Olympics, and even an underground landfill fire at Battery Park in New York City.

The Value of Local IMTs

Particularly after September 11, 2001, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognized the value of a core team that could initiate the emergency organization that could quickly respond to "urban" threats.

In August 2003, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) convened a group of stakeholders and experts from across the country to determine the best means to develop all-hazard Incident Management Teams (IMTs) across the country. While they gained the name "Metro Teams," in the ICS nomenclature, they are "Type 3 Incident Management Teams (IMT3)."

Team Composition

The make-up of an IMT3 is the command and general staff positions in an ICS organization. Agencies that sponsor teams pre-designate the members to ensure that they have the necessary training, experience, and personal traits to fulfill the required roles and responsibilities.

Under this concept, the IMT3 initially responds to the incident and establishes the ICS command structure. If the incident stays within the management capabilities of the IMT3, then it manages the incident to its abatement and conclusion. However, the IMT3 travels light and has limited capabilities to expand. If the incident demands a larger management capability, then orders go out for a regional "Type 2" (IMT2) or national "Type 1" (IMT1) incident management team and they transition the incident.

IMT Development

The USFA advocates the development of IMTs in the metropolitan areas based on the following goals:

- Individual member capability training, so that the IMT can perform its functional requirements;
- Training IMTs to support command, so that the IMT

can work in support of command's objectives;

- Provide mutual aid staff - unified command training and development;
- Training to utilize the Integrated Emergency Management System.

The success of incident management teams is as much a function of their formation as a team, as it is their specific assignment training. As mentioned previously, team members come to the team with a skill set and then they train as a team. During this team training, they discover each other's strengths and weaknesses and get to know each other. If the same group had to work together, ad hoc, a period known as the "mating dance," occurs before the IMT becomes effective.

The overall goal of USFA's Incident Management Team (IMT) program is to develop state and regional IMTs to function under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) during a large and/or complex incident or a major event. USFA designed the course for those personnel assigned to function in a Type 3 All-Hazards IMT during a large/complex incident, typically extending into the second operational period.

Citygate's Training Program

Citygate has a program that supports the development of IMTs with a blend of specific functional training in the particular roles on an IMT such as Safety Officer or Logistics Section Chief supported by a unique cadre of instructors. Most have experience on Type 1 incident management teams. Many are

training course development subject matter experts for courses.

The professional trainers at Citygate realize that there is no way that all the IMT3s can get their training through on the job experience -- there simply are not enough disasters. However, through an intense application of solid practical certified training, backed by decades of experience, they can prepare these teams to handle almost anything that comes their way.

The Citygate IMT3 Training includes the following:

1. Skill training in the target positions (each of the section chief courses includes a four to eight-hour review of the subordinate units' training material:
 - Safety Officer
 - Information Officer
 - Liaison Officer
 - Operations Section Chief
 - Planning Section Chief
 - Logistics Section Chief
 - Finance/Administration Section Chief
2. Team training - Command and General Staff Functions in the Incident Command System; Command and General Staff Training.

This combination of skill set and team training provides the members with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to readily go into the field and function successfully. The Citygate training model, with its cadre of highly qualified instructors, fulfills all of the USFAs goals.

For more information, call Citygate at (916) 458-5100.



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