

Hurricane Sandy Hot Wash

12/4/12

Participants:

Keith Alvey

Vic Hencken

Clayton Kolb

Scott Graham

Kurt Weirich

Anne Reynolds

Gregg O'Ryon

Charley Shimanski

Trevor Rigger

Lauren Twohig

Anne Palmer (scribe)

*Bill Malfara & Becky McCorry dialed in for a portion of the meeting

Overview:

Trevor – This is not the time to do full blown after action. Rather, there's a need to get together at a high level to explore challenges and plus sides that occurred at the beginning of operation so we don't lose sight of them. This hot wash will help inform the next phase of AARs. There is going to be some discussion about initial thoughts about Sandy at Gail's level. Some of these issues may be organizational as well as related specifically to Disaster Services.

Charley – Gail's direct reports will be doing an enterprise-wide lessons learned meeting next week. All of Gail's Direct Reports are encouraged to give feedback. Charley's hope to give feedback informed by this hot wash.

Major Challenges:

Keith –

1. Biggest challenge – Skill set that is possessed by our workforce. Not able to quickly adapt to large urban response. Chiefs good at knowing tactical but not good at using flexibility and developing strategy and forward planning. Also not good at scaling up. Need to elevate managers' and chiefs' thinking.
Trevor – We don't have OM training. Chiefs and managers are meant to direct a single program. Training doesn't explain how to select from an array of opportunities but rather gives specific direction.
Charley – Where do exercises fit into this to teach people that it's ok to be creative?
Anne – We are not poised to be flexible and agile as an organization (lack of automation, basic communication tools.) Were not able to turn ship even had great ideas.
Vic – At SV and MN level, have shallow pool to draw from. Lack of understanding of who's in charge.
Kurt – Agile thinking is one of the most critical factors. Tried innovative things early on that worked but didn't know how to follow up on them. Don't have way to capture info and improve. Need to teach situational leadership (focus on what is our mission vs what is our process)
2. Planning has been on flat disaster. Need to adapt to vertical response model.
3. Our mindset on how engage partners early on and throughout to maximize ARC visibility to support our partners while having visibility

Vic –

1. Skill sets of workers. Shallow middle management. Division of supporting regions and being a DRO, confusion over who to call when.
2. Didn't transition to DRO until 3-5 days after landfall. Caused delay in ordering staff and stuff. Lots of 2nd guessing at DOC of requests.
Trevor – We have a mirror structure at DOC and DRO. This causes confusion about authority.
Vic- Chapter staff have to be integrated into DRO. Keeping duplication just makes us thin all over.
Clayton – Integration was less of an issue in NY than it was in NJ. Planning for this happened after last year's AAR. Development of SDCT throughout state, layered into operation and they stayed.
3. ESF6 communications with the State. State couldn't articulate their needs.

Scott-

1. Need 2 or 3 models for a DRO that are elastic response models. Need 120 hr timeline post-landfall. Clarify what each entity is doing. Would have things like a planning, based of an ICS construct,...
Trevor – Biggest difference on how well we integrate is whether one region or multi-region area. When we have one region areas, we do pretty well on integration. When have multiple regions, more confusion.
Kurt – If do multi-regional construct, comes down to strength of OM team at the region.
Anne – Have tendency to create multiple levels. Long Island had essentially another DRO with more chiefs. This was done by incoming staff. We get attached to titles (i.e. OM Director for Kitchen #4.) They then created their own mini-operations. Chiefs were really acting as managers. Had too many people in Mass Care. Threw lots of people to solve problem.
Vic – Put depth to org chart don't duplicate org chart.
Trevor – We overwhelm the job with resources. Got to push leadership down a level rather than add layers on top (i.e. chief becomes manager and OM becomes Chief)
Keith – Resources that showed up weren't asked for. We created new reports and reporting requirements in the middle of the relief operation which taxed resources. We should build out the info and reporting requirements during steady-state so easier to facilitate in the future.
Trevor – Demand for info and reporting was more than we have seen before. Didn't' properly anticipate this.
Gregg – This request for reporting was driven by massive fundraising with questions about where Red Cross was/what doing with the money.
2. Tracking of our asset visibility. Not knowing when/where assets were/will be delivered. Pre-staging of supplies on Long Island saved lives but don't have awareness of what these assets are. Need a system to track/locate assets. We have got to get to an understanding as an organization of how many assets we need pre-staged. Need to determine our steady-state needs for assets.
Keith – Multiple systems failed (e.g. ERV tracking)
Gregg- The shared complexity of the logistics of these operations were huge. We didn't have the kind of sophistication needed for this size job. We used same system we always use.

Trevor-

1. Duplication of DOC with DRO
2. Logistics footprint
3. Talent pool
4. Authority (haven't talked about yet) – The authority all rests at NHQ, not on the DRO. Drives to multi-regional complexity
5. Sense of urgency (haven't talked about yet) – We don't have a program that builds services beyond sheltering initially. We focus a lot of energy on sheltering. There is an increased expectation for services

post landfall. What's the concept of operations that the chapter has to have to deliver services post landfall. What's the expectation? Comes to the 120 hour post landfall timeline. We didn't look beyond our national footprint for ERVs (i.e. Philly might have resources we could use). Strong bias toward mobile feeding might not have served us well in certain areas.

Best practices –See what work can be performed outside of the affected area (i.e. Packed coolers in Virginia)

Gregg –

1. Caliber of the people is a major issue(this is not a training issue)
2. Structure really matters. When disconnected from regions and multiple layers causes confusion
3. Lessons learned – strong job director model - Job Director asserted more authority than have seen in the past which was helpful. They took ownership, made decisions and pushed back
4. Volunteers were cared for well
5. How we could have made a larger mass care operation? i.e. – feeding sites at kitchens, tweet so get community to help deliver meals in urban environment, load up semis with meals versus ERVs

Charley-

Public trust: The “what's your level of trust in Red Cross” survey question went up by 4 points. Highest ever been since started to do this.

Clayton –

1. Leadership teams. How we identify how we train, plan and deploy together.
2. Understanding the role of the activity leads in the DOC. Expectation that the activity leads are the chief of chiefs? Need to clarify.
3. Expectations management pre-deployment. Expectations of OMGs. Need to be flexible. Clarify when folks are coming from the DOC what they are coming in to do. Are they assigned to the operation? Causes confusion around roles. Do site visits help?

Kurt –

1. Social media – Adhoc social media groups stood up after Sandy that became places where folks came together to say what doing or what needed. Hard to get people to understand that this is a resource for info sharing. How do we use social media to take in info on what community is doing to help unify/support efforts.
2. Partnerships – Lots of community engagement. Commitment of some of the partners didn't come through. How do we ground offers of community partners? Gave lots of stuff to partners to hand out but wasn't branded so wasn't awareness of what Red Cross was doing. Stickers never came.
3. Planning – Developed an incident action plan process that worked well to accomplish the tasks but as organization we don't have the discipline to make a plan, follow a plan and then plan again. Hard to build plans into next operational period.

Anne –

1. Smaller groups of people that train and deploy together to establish relief operations and mentor people to take it over. Professionalize this like CRT program.
2. Getting info from different places. Hard to respond to traditional hot shot process. Had hundreds of requests of all types. Ability to take, aggregate synthesize and adjust service delivery for the next day was not good. Got better after developed mass care planning cell.

Charley – Weren't tied in well with Digidoc

Marita Wenner – (Was not able to join call but shared the following in advance of the meeting)

1. EFS6 for NJ is assigned to the state and Salvation Army not ARC. Past performance, relationships, and trust with partners had to overcome or developed.
2. Evacuation shelters were overwhelmed and additional help was requested from state immediately impacted. Since the entire state was affected, either with storm damage or power outage, DRO folks had not yet arrived to support.
3. Communication directly after storm was poor due to massive power outages. Scope and scale was not immediate which impeded ability to respond. Safety of workers was primary concern due to massive wind damage and downed trees.
4. Having the right leadership was critical to the success of the operation. Once we knew what we were dealing with, everyone did the job they were assigned. We all worked closely with the regions and our partners to develop plans for service delivery. Having everyone arrive at headquarters, get oriented and told what the expectations of the job director were before deploying to the field made everyone feel that they were on the same team and no one was getting special treatment. Teaming up experienced leadership with regional folks worked very well. Regions felt like they were in control of the operation, but had the experienced and knowledge they needed at hand to make the right decisions.
5. Creation of a planning cell was important to service delivery. Having state officer in the planning group needed for local information. On an operation of this size a planning team is critical to success.