Chapter 7
Use Team Building to Make the Most of Your Public– Private Partnerships

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ABSTRACT

Disaster response is a team effort that begins long before any disaster happens. Teams and work group dynamics have been studied by organizational theorists for decades. It is important to recognize and understand the differences and similarities between teams and work groups in order to most effectively use all teams and all team members in all phases of emergency management, particularly in disaster response. This chapter explores how this differentiation, the distinctive features of work groups and teams, can be used in different places and different phases of response to enhance the efficacy of emergency management. And, because public-private partnerships have played and will play an increasingly vital role within emergency management, this chapter discusses how to use the foundation provided by organizational theorists to make the most of public-private partnerships. This chapter discusses how to exploit differences, draw them out, and use them to enhance the response to incidents.

BACKGROUND

The National Planning Frameworks establish the context for how the United States of America prepares for, mitigates or prevents, responds to and recovers from a vast array of incidents regardless of size or location, natural or man-made. The National Response Framework (NRF) outlines the overall mission and goals for responding to incidents including emergency support functions (ESF's). Today, public-private partnerships can play a vital role in how members of communities achieve the response goals outlined in the NRF. Within the NRF the ESF's specifically delineate which government agencies are responsible for the functions required to respond to incidents, and which agency is the lead agency for specific ESF's. In addition, the ESF's delineate private sector roles and responsibilities. However, neither the NRF nor the ESF's give any specific guidance on how individuals, groups, organizations or companies can or should work together to achieve the mission of responding to incidents.[1]

Once an incident has occurred, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides guidance on how to manage the response to that specific incident built around the concepts of the ICS and EOC's.[2] The ICS standardizes the organization of individuals responding to incidents and coordinates their activities through a chain-of-command that includes development of a common operating picture and the concept of unity of command. Individuals responding to an incident and assigned to positions throughout the chain of command act together as a work group. Emergency operations centers support multi-agency coordination as well as information sharing, communications, resource management and the support of decision-making. An EOC supports an incident command through strategically planning required resource allocation given the common operating picture developed by an incident commander. This type of strategic planning is more effective when the entities within an EOC operate as a team. Differences between work groups and teams are illustrated in Table 1.

INCIDENT COMMAND WORK GROUPS

The response to incidents can be extremely challenging and dangerous. It is not the time for individuals to act without caution. Often the environment after an incident is dirty and lacks even the most basic of necessities, e.g. shelter, power, potable water. Immediately following an incident, responders may be engaged in search and rescue efforts, trying to minimize the loss of life. This phase of response may seem

Table 1. Work groups and teams: similarities and differences

	Work Groups	**Teams**
Accountability	Individual accountability	Individual and team accountability
	Accountable to a manager	Members are mutually accountable to each other
Orientation	Fulfill narrowly defined duties	Focus on broader, external needs (e.g. serving customers)
	Group members as individuals	Cognitive and emotional investment of members where they identify themselves as a team
Leadership	Assigned to a single person	Shared leadership
Work Assignments	Individually based	Collective work products
	Goals and objectives assigned	Team understands organizational strategy and creates goals and objectives within that context
	Organization controlled	Team controlled
Meetings	Focused on efficiency	Focused on open-ended discussion and problem-solving
	Discuss, decide, and delegate	Discuss, decide, and engage in collaborative, real-time work
Decision-making	Social pressures impede divergent thinking	Divergent thinking is encouraged
	Group members screen/filter outside information	Information from outside the team is sought

Note. From *A Primer on Organizational Behavior* by James L. Bowditch and Anthony F. Buono, 2001, p. 161, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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