

## **Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee Mid-America Regional Council Guiding Principles and Funding Policies**

The Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee has endorsed a set of guiding principles and policies. The committee has identified a number of regional initiatives that merit further examination to help build metropolitan wide capabilities to respond to acts of terrorism. The committee views this as a dynamic document, given the tremendous demands being placed on local communities to respond to new threats and the recent changes at the federal level with the new Department of Homeland Security. In the weeks and months ahead, the committee may amend this document to better reflect the interests, concerns and priorities of the region.

The committee adopted a set of guiding principles at its initial meeting in June 2002. These principles recognize

- each local jurisdiction must assume ultimate responsibility for its community in responding to new threats from terrorism,
- metropolitan Kansas City is a bi-state region composed of multiple jurisdictions of differing sizes and response capabilities, and
- as a bi-state region, different state laws and regulations govern local actions

The Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee recognizes that the ability of any one jurisdiction to successfully respond to any major event is dependent upon regional capabilities and cooperative arrangements. The committee is working with local agencies to design an emergency response system that is comprehensive, integrated and truly regional in approach. The principles approved by the committee include:

1. An event in the Kansas City metropolitan area involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD) will affect the political, social and economic conditions of the entire region.
2. Response to a WMD event in the Kansas City metropolitan area will require the resources of every level of government, most of the area's health care institutions, much of the business community and many of the area's human services agencies.
3. Due to the multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary nature of response to a WMD event, the use of the incident management system, particularly the use of unified command, is imperative.
4. Preparedness for, response to and recovery from a WMD event in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area should be based on a comprehensive, coordinated regional strategy.

5. Funding and resources obtained by area jurisdictions and/or agencies should be invested to enhance the comprehensive regional approach to homeland security.
6. Local government agencies, working together from throughout the metropolitan Kansas City area, recognize the importance of increasing their mutual capabilities to ensure the safety of residents and their property. Local and regional emergency planning, response and mitigation efforts are being strengthened to prevent the loss of life, to minimize any damage to property and to restore community business activity if an event should occur.

### **Homeland Security Funding Policies**

New federal resources are being made available to states with the provisions that 75% of the resources be made available to increase local capabilities. Area cities and counties are receiving funds through the state departments of health and emergency management. The Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee believes that it is imperative that work continue among local agency personnel to ensure progress toward building regional capabilities.

As discussions proceed at the federal, state, regional or local level for use of homeland security grant funds, the following policies should be promoted.

#### **Support Regional Approaches**

Federal legislation authorizing and appropriating funds for homeland security should include language supporting regional approaches; however, the funding streams and requirements tend to favor state and local government allocations. ***The Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee continues to support federal and state legislation, regulations, policies and funding strategies that support regional approaches.***

#### **Build Regional Capabilities**

Purchases and investments made by individual agencies and jurisdictions using new federal resources should be accomplished recognizing that response to a WMD event will likely involve multiple agencies and jurisdictions from across the region. ***Local agencies should make investments in new equipment, trained personnel, or communications or information systems consistent with regional policies and standards and in ways that help build regional capabilities for effective response.***

The Committee promotes the use of the Heart of America Metro Fire Chiefs' Incident Management System to guide regional response. During a WMD event, it is imperative that responding agencies are familiar with and can share one another's resources. By establishing standards for equipment and other resources (detection, personal protection, communications, decontamination, surveillance systems, information systems), it will make it easier for personnel from one agency to support another.

### **Maximize Resource Sharing/Cooperative Purchasing Opportunities**

There may be opportunities to take advantage of quantity discounts for pharmaceuticals, equipment, or other resources. Training programs could be implemented across agencies if standard procedures and resources are utilized.

***Local agencies should purchase new equipment so that the region maximizes opportunities for resource sharing and takes advantage of cooperative purchasing.***

### **Commit to Wise Use of New Resources**

New resources should be targeted to ensure that the community and the region are better prepared to address new terrorist threats. Since the new federal funds will not cover ongoing personnel and support expenses, local agencies should commit to covering those costs with local funds to ensure that the equipment purchased with federal funds are deployed by trained staff.

***Prior to investing new federal funds in new equipment and other resources, local agencies should commit to providing personnel and ongoing support for the new resources with local funds. Local agencies should commit that the new federal funds will not be used to supplant local resources for ongoing emergency response and public health responsibilities.***

Local agencies should evaluate the need for new equipment/resources by assessing what currently exists and what is available through mutual aid. Local agencies, working together, should determine the level/number of various types of resources to ensure adequate availability in numbers and locations, but avoid investing in more than is needed for regional capabilities.

### **Develop New Regional Capabilities**

The region's ability to respond to the new terrorism threats requires new regional capabilities. Through MMRS and other homeland security planning, a number of significant new regional needs have been identified. These resources should be evaluated, and if support exists, regional funding should be pursued. Additional projects may be added to this list as additional planning and coordination efforts take place.

- ***Metropolitan Emergency Information System***

Through the Kansas City, MO MMRS grant, MARC has engaged Apex Innovations to design a web-based information system to allow emergency response agencies to share information before, during and after an incident. The system's first phase is in final stages of design, and an initial system will be available in late 2002 for agency review. Funds will be needed to enrich the system and make it available to agencies across the Kansas City region.

- ***Regional Radio Interoperability***

The ability of local emergency response agencies across disciplines and across jurisdictions to communicate during a large-scale incident is a need identified through the MMRS planning process. Through one of the early equipment grants to Jackson County, seventy 800 MHz radios were purchased and are being distributed to area emergency response agencies. While this new equipment resource will enhance regional capabilities, additional resources are needed. A new committee under the 9-1-1 Technical Committee will work on this issue.

- ***Urban Heavy Search and Rescue Team***

The need for equipment, personnel, training and other resources for an Urban Heavy Search and Rescue Team has been expressed by local emergency responders. This resource would improve the region's capabilities to respond to building collapse, from either an intentional act of terrorism or natural disaster.

- ***Regional Emergency Coordination Center***

The MMRS planning has identified the need to design a regional Emergency Coordination Center capability (either facility-based or virtual) to allow agencies across jurisdictions to coordinate emergency operations during a large-scale event, particularly a bioterrorism event. The development of this Center might involve the investment in new equipment in each major local government EOC, the use of the regional emergency information system, additional radio or video capabilities and new protocols for such a center's operation.

- ***Regional Joint Information Center***

The MMRS planning has identified the need to design a Regional Joint Information Center capability to allow agencies across jurisdictions to work together during a large-scale event to coordinate information to the media and the public. This concept of a Regional Information Center was utilized by MARC during the transition to the year 2000 (Y2K) and on 9/11/01.

- ***Reserve of Pharmaceuticals (Antibiotics)***

The MMRS plans and other local bioterrorism response plans identify the need for a cache of pharmaceuticals to treat emergency response personnel and initial victims of a bioterrorist attack. Many agencies have expressed concern with spending large sums on pharmaceuticals with a short shelf-life. A proposal has come forward to work with a pharmaceutical wholesaler to maintain a supply of antibiotics or other needed medicines on-hand, rotating the stock to avoid expiration. Funding from area communities could be pooled to support a regional supply.

- ***Critical Facility Floor Plans and Incident Management System***

The Kansas City, MO Police Department's South Patrol Division has developed an information system to store critical facility floor plans and plans to enter and secure those facilities during an emergency incident. The system is designed to allow for use by officers on laptops in their patrol cars. The system could be utilized by emergency response agencies across the metro area. Resources are needed to build the

database of floor plans and plans on how emergency personnel would enter and secure each facility.

- ***Regional Training and Exercise Program***

The MMRS and other homeland security planning have identified the need for continued training and exercises to ensure that the region is adequately prepared to respond to acts of terrorism. A regional training and exercise program would be a cost-effective way to increase skills, and evaluate and enhance the capability of the region's emergency response agencies to effectively respond to a large-scale regional event. This program could build on the training already coordinated through MARC's Government Training Institute. Exercises developed and conducted under this program would be multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional, and would focus on regional interagency coordination and cooperation.

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