NH Houses of Worship

Emergency Preparedness: A Community Approach

Bob Christensen, Operations Chief, NH HSEM
Where Do We Start?

• Recognize and respond to what is happening worldwide.

• Fully commit to the Emergency Preparedness (EP) needs of your house of worship.

• Utilize a “whole community approach” to safety (utilize subject matter experts).
Think with an “All-Hazards” Approach

- Medical Emergencies
- Cyber Security (D.O.D., fishing attacks, etc.)
- Social Media Vulnerabilities
- Vandalism / Theft
- Loss of Personally Identifiable Information
- Abuse of the Vulnerable (children, elderly)
- Fire
- Active Threat (intent to injure or kill)
- Suspicious Packages / Bomb Threats
How Do We Tackle So Many Dangers?

Frequency >>>

Severity >>>

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New Hampshire Department of Safety • Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
What Tools are Available?

- HSEM’s House of Worship EP Checklist
- HSEM’s Self-Assessment Form
- HSEM’s Resource Center [https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?page_id=5994](https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?page_id=5994)
- DHS’ Links, Templates, Documents
- Insurance Companies’ Resources
- Local Fire and Police Personnel (historical and geographic knowledge)
Who Are My Partners?

- Your Local Fire and Police Departments
- Your Town’s Emergency Management Director (EMD)
- Other Local Houses of Worship
- NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- U.S. Attorney’s Office / County Attorney’s Office
Let’s Get a Team Focused on This…

- Discuss an approach strategy with your leadership…get buy-in.
- Talk about intentions with your congregation…build more buy-in.
- Pull a team together…utilize buy-in.
- Tackle “low hanging fruit” first, then bigger goals…maximize buy-in.
Teach, Train, Exercise…Repeat

• TEACH an all-hazards approach to EP.
• TRAIN ALL staff (paid and volunteer).
• EXERCISE your plans (Workshop, TTX, Functional).
• REPEAT (repetition builds capacity, turnover depletes capacity).
Some EP Core Capabilities We Should Build

- Planning
- Situational Awareness
- Threat / Hazard Identification
- Communication and Coordination
- Public Information (internal and external)
What is an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)?

• An emergency preparedness guidance document uniquely built and applied to your organization.
• It drives your EP training, budget, exercises and responses.
• Needs broad buy-in for both assembly and application.
• Needs to be updated regularly.
What Next Steps Should We Take?

1. Have open discussions with your insurance company.
2. Invite fire and police to your facility.
3. Connect regularly with local houses of worship; compare notes and resources.
4. Get going on the items we discussed today.
You have a committed community of EP professionals at the local, state and federal levels ready to help.

Questions? / Comments?