

Michelle Bandel  
21 March 2022

Watching the three interviews was extremely interesting as it provided three different perspectives on emergency preparedness: government, business, and community or individual. The first interview with Thomas Chin, the Response Coordinator from San Francisco's Department of Emergency Management, provided us with a government-level perspective on emergency preparedness. He mentions that he and his team at the emergency operations center are responsible for managing the entire city with their duty officer managing the incident on a micro-level and the center dealing with more incidents taking place such as 911 calls, and medical emergencies, among others. As the response coordinator, Chin oversees and manages the duty officer program (training of equipment and officers) and he also manages the alert, warning, notification system (alerting the public, warning and giving the public the proper next steps, notifying city partners of what is occurring in the city). He is asked about his thoughts or priorities when it comes to preparedness, mitigation, and response, and he mentions that the three tenets all work together as a cycle and feed off each other, thus no step of the cycle is more important than the other.

The second interview with Carmela Hinderaker, Director of Business Continuity, provides us with a different perspective, the business-level perspective on emergency preparedness. Her interview begins with questions related to planning before an emergency and she mentions that planning without a doubt makes a difference, however, going through the events allows one to learn. In other words, you can plan for certain things before an event takes place but when the event happens, there are certain factors that throw the planning off because some things simply cannot be planned for, and you have to learn when the event is occurring. Additionally, she mentions that every event is so different and unique that although you may know which agencies can assist, other things such as transit time, after effects, and other external factors, limit our ability to plan and make appropriate decisions. Hinderaker monitors the supply chain that affects C & S so anything that affects customers, vendors, and operations which includes hurricanes, storms, wildfires, pandemics, and other disasters. Lastly, Hinderaker discusses her role and mentions that although she is pretty much on call 24/7, she is in close contact with the company's leadership because they always have to be kept in the loop, which enables her to strengthen her communication skills internally and externally (with other companies as well as with her own company). This interview was interesting to watch because often times we only focus on preparedness and mitigation of government and officials without realizing how impactful certain events, emergencies, and disasters are when it comes to companies, businesses, and other non-governmental organizations.

Lastly, the interview with Peter Miller the consulting planner and a survivor of the 9/11 tragedy, provides us with a community or individual-level perspective on emergency preparedness. Miller had been working in the World Trade Center since the 1980s and he recounts and describes the events that took place on the day of the 9/11 attacks. As a result of this tragic event, many have reviewed and updated evacuation protocols that have improved and will continue to improve response efforts. Miller discusses a bombing event in 1993 which led him and people in the WTC realize that there were no set instructions on effective evacuation and/or response, thus, when 9/11 came around he had a better sense of the building's plans, location of stairwells, and exits, however, he certainly did not expect the building to collapse the way it did. Lastly, Miller mentions that the years following this tragedy, he has been able to connect with survivors from other states who have also experienced first-hand emergencies and these connections have allowed and provided input to disaster planning guides and better response strategies. The three interviews were extremely informative and revealed emergency response and planning that occurs at different levels. It was interesting and eye opening to see that although we sometimes tend to underestimate the impact of disasters on certain organizations or businesses and assume that emergencies like these only really "add extra work" to government agencies and first responders, this is certainly not the case because disasters have an impact on nearly every level and every individual.