

Jaelyn Perhati

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Brief: Three Perspectives on Preparedness

As Coppola mentions in chapter 5, “Citizens of almost all nations have come to expect that their government will intervene in times of disaster to provide life-saving and sustaining assistance” (Coppola, 2015). To be prepared for emergency and disaster response at the government level requires significant collaboration and coordination. An emergency operations plan (EOP) dictates which agencies and individuals will be involved in response and includes their list of responsibilities. A comprehensive EOP can assess risks and hazards; provide a situational assessment that include the state of geography, politics, and demographics; includes maps; and provides jurisdictional information (Coppola, 2015).

Government preparedness is a coordinated effort that is often supported by a central incident command center and communications preparedness center. The government has additional roles in preparedness that require that adequate supplies and equipment are available, staff is trained and ready to respond, communication pathways are established and maintained with businesses, and the public has knowledge of the various drills, alerts, and warning systems the government utilizes.

In emergency situations, businesses work hard to ensure their contingency plans would be able to move forward and ensure business continuity. Business continuity is a term utilized to describe how businesses should operate when coping with an emergency. Businesses should have continuity and disaster recovery plans ready as part of their preparedness measures. Government entities, such as FEMA offer resources and guidelines online to assist businesses with developing these plans and ensuring they can address the impact of a variety of hazards (FEMA, 2022).

At the community and individual levels there are different aspects of preparedness that must be managed by the community itself, or coordinated between the community, businesses, and government. Government often gives the community level the means to be prepared - for example, with the development of early warning systems and alerts, communities can be prepared as early as possible in the event of an emergency.

Community preparedness is also dependent on the community being able to rally together and ensure that community members have the tools needed for how to plan and respond to hazards. Entities like the NYC Emergency Management Department have developed toolkits, trainings, and collated additional resources in a sensitive manner that is able to account for the different types of communities who could utilize their resources, such as faith-based groups, community boards, civic associations, and more (NYC Emergency Management Department, n.d.). Public

education, awareness, behavioral changes (pre/post-disaster), social media, and more all impact how communities are prepared and respond.

After listening to each of the interviews, there were several similarities that came up. The most striking similarity was that of the importance of communication before, during, and after an emergency. Communication is a highly coordinated process between alerts and warnings produced by the government and its command centers, to businesses trying to ensure preparedness and continuity in the event, and to the community utilizing all the information being shared with them to know how to respond. However, while each interviewee discussed the perspectives of government, businesses, and the community level - it should be noted that due to human behavior, the unexpected, and additional factors, we may never truly be 100% prepared but we can collectively strive to be as prepared as possible.

Resources

- Coppola D. (2015), Ch 5 Preparedness.
https://brightspace.nyu.edu/content/enforced/238445-SP23_GPH-GU_5210_1_001/Weekly%20Readings/Week%203%20Lesson%203/Ch%205%20Coppola%202015.pdf
- FEMA. (2022, December 19). *Prepare My Business for an Emergency*. Homeland Security. <https://www.dhs.gov/prepare-my-business-emergency>
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