

Semhal Selamawi
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Brief 3.1 – Three Perspective on Preparedness

Thomas Chin explained how all three phases in disaster response are extremely important and necessary to achieve a goal, but he really focused on the response aspect, specifically in the city of San Francisco. Chin and his colleagues are Duty Officers, which are the primary point of contact after first responders for disasters or incidents in San Francisco. If first responder resources are low, they are also in charge of obtaining additional resources. Chin explains how first responders are usually focused on the incident while duty officers and emergency management handle the city overall in regard to response. Some of these response strategies include alerting and/or warning the public of incidents. Chin describes an “opt-in” program that people can sign up for and receive emergency alerts. They also have “wireless emergency alerts” on cellular devices, such as amber alerts and tornado warnings, as well as emergency alert systems on TVs and radios. The wireless alerts and emergency alerts are important as they also reach individuals who did not “opt-in” to alerts and tourists or individuals that are not aware of the alert system.

Carmela Hinderaker is the Director of Business Continuity at C&S Grocers, and she tends to focus more on preparedness/planning phase of disaster response, specifically in the business sector. She discussed how she oversees multiple departments, handles logistics and supply chain and how incidents and disasters may impact business and stakeholders. Since the company is a multiregional wholesale company, there are many different factors Hinderaker would have to plan and be prepared for. Some of these factors and/or incidents include hurricanes, inclement weather, warehouse fires, pandemics, and even IT outages. These factors not only affect the company but the vendors and other businesses they work with, as well as the employees (drivers) and customers.

The most important piece of information in the Peter Miller interview was that many people in the building lacked emergency preparedness training due to lack of planning and organization. People in the “froze up” and had delayed responses to the tragic attack; the interviewer describes that this is not anyone’s fault but a normal response from people who are not adequately prepared. Peter Miller experienced something similar in 1993 when the World Trade Center was bombed, and even after going through a similar experience, he also was delayed in reacting. Professor Gershon explains how necessary disaster preparedness is even in buildings, and how many people lack this type of training or preparedness.