



2010 Annual Report to the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers

1. Purpose: The purpose of this report is provide the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Group (NEGECPG) with an update of progress since the last report provided to the NEGECPG in St John, NB during September 2009.

2. General:

The International Emergency Managers Group (IEMG) was formed at the direction of the NEGECPG to enhance the capability of the six state and five provincial members to provide support to one another in preparation for, response to and recovery from disaster events. Since its inception, the IEMG has remained focused on developing mutual aid capabilities, sustaining those capabilities and investigation methods to expand those capabilities.

During this past year, the members have responded to numerous serious disaster situations, conducted face-to-face working/training meetings and developed a near-term plan of tasks and objectives. The remainder of this report provides a summary of these activities.

3. Significant Events:

The single most significant effort by the members was our involvement with the jurisdictional response to the H1N1 Pandemic. All members were involved to varying degrees with the preparation for and response to this major threat. Whether acting in a supporting role or as the lead agencies, the members' ability and experience with coordinating the activities related to the non-medical aspects of this event proved to be an important element to the successful response. While there were no requests of mutual aid, there were numerous examples to cross-border information exchange, both electronically and verbally, as this threat matured through various stages.

Each of the members also responded to significant man-made or natural events within their jurisdictions. A sampling of those events is provided at Attachment (a) to this report. Again, there were no requests for mutual aid support these events provided an excellent opportunity to exercise our communications interoperability capabilities. Exchange of emails, phone calls, visibility of web based emergency management collaboration tools and access to jurisdiction conference calls demonstrated an expanding ability and willingness to share critical information in a timely manner. Having witnessed first hand the value of this routine information exchange, the members intend to focus considerable effort on standardizing the processes and leveraging existing technologies to increase capacity and efficiencies. Additionally, these events, and their

very real potential to become even more serious, highlight the need for a prescribed process that enables our members to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of others.

Most recently, we have experienced the need for cross-border cooperation in response to the forest fires in Quebec. Fire fighters were sent to reinforce the local resources of Quebec as part of a response system very similar to the one used by the IEMG. We have also used the IEMG network to survey members regarding assets available to respond to the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. The rapid collection of this information during the ongoing emergency reflects the utility of our efforts. Finally, plans are underway to conduct an exercise in September that is primarily designed to engage our Federal partners in those issues that present challenges to the IEMG members, but are beyond the purview of the members to resolve. New Brunswick and Maine will be the lead representatives for the IEMG.

4. Meeting Activities:

Freeport, ME

During the October 20-22, 2009 period, the State of Maine hosted our Fall Meeting. This meeting was primarily focused on a Functional Exercise based on a hurricane scenario. Primary objectives were to test resource request procedures, investigate legal issue and involve the private sector. Secondary objectives included, testing capability to maintain a common operating picture, simulating operations from geographically separated EOCs, and defining the role of Federal partners.

Communications between State and Provinces, in depth discussion of the resource requisition form and process, and testing of a New Brunswick developed situational awareness platform were noted as particular strengths of the exercise. The need to plan for requesting federal resources and the associated processes, clarification of the IEMG resource request procedures, and the need for a resource request tracking system were noted as areas for improvement.

Not surprisingly, most of the lessons learned generally centered on two main areas: communications and logistics coordination. The specific lessons learned in these two areas formed the basis for in depth discussions at our spring meeting.

Participants at the meeting also received a detailed explanation of the science behind hurricanes and the nature of their behavior prepared and presented by the National Weather Service.

St. John's, NL

During the May 18-20, 2010 period, the Province of Newfoundland Labrador hosted our Spring Meeting. Although travel restrictions curtailed participation by several jurisdictions, the meeting provided an excellent opportunity for both professional development as well as a time to conduct some in-depth discussions and strategic planning with regard to IEMG operations.

The Department of National Defense, Maritime Command provided a detailed briefing on the activities of Canadian Forces in response to the Haiti Earthquake. The flexibility of maritime

forces was clearly evident and an important learning point. The New Hampshire Emergency Management Agency provided extensive briefings on their response to a severe ice storm in 2008 and to a unique case of anthrax contamination. As with the Haiti briefing, there were numerous facets to both of these responses and many lessons learned. Because of the value of these real-world events, it is our intention to continue such briefings at future meetings.

The meeting participants also divided into two working groups to address a series of critical overarching issues and sub-topics. The major issues we addressed were:

- Developing methods to maintain situational awareness and a common operating picture during daily operations and under emergency situations.
- Identifying response thresholds where engaging IEMG support will be required
- Developing a tactical approach in response to requests for assistance

As a result of these discussions, the group was able to develop a clearly defined list of tasks to be accomplished in the coming months. A sampling of those tasks is provided below:

5. Near Term Objectives:

- Designate and train two individuals from each jurisdiction to act as requisition coordinators (A-Team).
- Determine primary and alternative jurisdictions pre-designated to provide A-Team support to specific member jurisdictions.
- Determine feasibility of A-Teams to operate on-site and remotely.
- Investigate process for members to request private sector resources from another jurisdiction.
- Review existing cross-border movement for use by other resources, such as Search and Rescue Teams and HAZMAT response teams.
- Determine feasibility of using NEXUS cards to expedite cross-border movement.
- Review the various Situational Awareness tools and determine how we can best use them.
- Determine thresholds for publishing situational awareness information.
- Refine content of Situation Reports to ensure they contain the information members need.

6. Challenges:

The extensive distance between some of the member jurisdictions drives a requirement to use technology to accomplish ongoing work. This slows the rate of progress, but members are continuing to find alternative solutions.

The semi-annual meetings provide an opportunity to get work done that cannot be effectively accomplished remotely. Travel restrictions are having an impact on jurisdictional participation. Loss of input from non-participants is difficult to measure or overcome.

Developing response procedures is only half the battle. We need to educate and train ourselves to be fully prepared. These activities require resources that are competing with other demands. The members will continue working to maintain these activities as a priority.

7. Fall 2010 Meeting

Our next meeting is scheduled for the first week of December and will be hosted by New Hampshire. The agenda will be focused on learning from response events members have experienced, continued work on the tasks outlined above and further progress on the overall Work Plan. Prior to that meeting work efforts will continue through a series of conference calls at both the Director and Working Group levels.

Respectfully submitted July 12, 2010.

Aaron Campbell
Canadian Co-Chair

Robert McAleer
United States Co-Chair

Summary of Significant Events**Connecticut**

- Kleen Energy Gas Explosion Feb 2010
- Storms and Flooding March 2010
- Winter storms 2009/2010

Maine

- Summer Flooding June-July 2009
- Flooding and Wind February-March 2010
- Flooding Late-March 2010

Massachusetts

- Flooding Event March/April 2010
- MWRA Water Emergency (2.5 million people affected) May 2010
- Winter Storms 2009/2010

New Hampshire

- 1st U.S. confirmed case of Gastrointestinal Anthrax December 2009
- Nor'Easter Disaster Declaration February 2010
- Flooding events March 2010
- EOC and Multi-Agency response to possible hostage situation May 2010

Rhode Island

- March 2010 flooding

Vermont

- January 2010 record setting snowfall
- January 2010 radioactive leak
- March 2010 flooding
- May 2010 high winds and tornado

Nova Scotia

- April 2009 Urban forest fire in Halifax
- January 2010 Repatriation of Canadians from Haiti (post-earthquake response)

New Brunswick

- 2010 Port Elgin storm surge

Newfoundland Labrador

- January 2010 telecommunications outage
- March 2010 ice storm

Prince Edward Island

- January 2010 storm surge

Quebec

- Nearly 500 events during the 2009-2010 timeframe (mostly flooding and landslides)
- Coordination of nearly 750 responses by ministries and governmental organizations
- Evacuation of 13,250 citizens
- Repatriation of Canadians from Haiti (post-earthquake response)

