

Emergency Management for the Everyday Citizen

Liam A. Carroll

For many laypeople, Emergency Management is shrouded in mystery. If you are considering Emergency Management/ Homeland Security as a degree or career choice, please read on. For all intents and purposes, Emergency Management is very similar to when a child suffers an injury. Allow me to explain with an easy analogy.

Injured Child

- 1) When a kid gets a wound, the kid puts his hand or a towel over the wound to temporarily slow the bleeding.
- 2) The child immediately summons Mom. Mom says “everything will be OK” and puts a bandage on the wound.
- 3) Mom calls for Dad to go to the pharmacy and get better equipment to help with the child’s injury. Again, this is bigger and better but not always enough.
- 4) If the injury is bad enough, the final place to turn to is a hospital. So Dad makes the decision to go to the hospital Emergency Room. The ER has the resources to fix almost everything.
- 5) The injured child is now in the hands of the Hospital and all their resources.
- 6) The child cannot live forever at the hospital. So once the wound is healed enough, the child is discharged back to happily playing at home. Mom was right, “everything will be ok.”

Injured Community (Disaster)

- 1) When a community suffers a disaster, the Emergency Manager/911 System deploys its local resources. The local resources are only going to ‘slow the bleeding’ and are temporary.
- 2) The Local Emergency Manager immediately summons the County Emergency Manager says “everything will be OK” and applies County support that will last a little longer.
- 3) The County Emergency Manager calls for the Governor to get the State’s better equipment. Again, this is bigger and better but not always enough.
- 4) If the disaster is bad enough, the final place to turn to is the Federal Emergency Management Agency. So the Governor makes the decision to go to FEMA. They have the resources and funding to fix almost everything.
- 5) The local disaster is now in the hands of the Federal Government and all their resources are available, even the monies to pay for recovery.
- 6) FEMA cannot stay in the community forever. So once the disaster is recovered the Federal, State and County government methodically withdraw and the local community is back to normal. The local Emergency Manager was right, “everything will be ok.”

That’s a very happy story and a functional system. But imagine the tragedy that would have unfolded if the child didn’t know how to summon Mom! The injury would’ve proven to be bad. Hence the local Emergency Manager (child) must be prepared, in advance, to call for Mom (the County). Otherwise, the rest of the chain of recovery will not occur. And that is why a local Emergency Manager is needed, and must be in place and prepared **before** disaster strikes. I hope this has helped clarify Emergency Management as a degree or career choice.

Author's Bio:

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