

Find articles containing:

SEARCH

| Advanced Search

Welcome, Guest | Log In | Register | Forgot Your Password?

Home : Industry : Standards

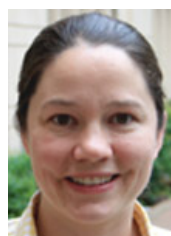
Implementing PPD-8: New Opportunities, Greater Challenges

ARTICLE

COMMENTS

by AMANDA FAUL

Tue, February 26, 2013



The U.S. homeland security and emergency management communities are now waiting for the release, of the five national planning frameworks outlined in Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8) issued by President Obama two years ago. For most members of the preparedness community, the two-year anniversary of PPD-8 will provide the first full-scale insight into how the White House plans: (a) to position the nation to effectively prepare for a possible worst-case scenario; and (b) to coordinate, across all levels of government and the

private sector, the operational actions likely to be needed.

At the state level, law enforcement and emergency management agencies have been reviewing and discussing the five frameworks mentioned above:

prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. The specific details of how the federal government will address each one are still being finalized. However, some changes already have been initiated at the state and federal levels to address each framework and take advantage of the new opportunities provided by the preparedness doctrine. Nonetheless, at least some of the likely barriers to full implementation may be prohibitive. These barriers include the necessary re-organization and re-writing of agency and jurisdictional plans to reflect core capabilities, and the complexity of some core capabilities, which span multiple, diverse functions.

Full Implementation Likely – Several Caveats Also

It seems likely that PPD-8 may be “fully” implemented, insofar as possible, at the federal level in President Obama’s second term. Although some PPD-8 tasks already have been issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to states and major cities, it may be several more years before the second-anniversary changes can be fully implemented by state and local governments. Nonetheless, leaders across all levels of government are evaluating the practicality and sustainability aspects of adopting the PPD-8 guidelines beyond what they are required to do to maintain their eligibility for the homeland security grant funding provided by the federal government.

The federal government’s last attempt at capabilities-based preparedness, articulated in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) [National Preparedness Guidelines](#), put special emphasis on use of the [Target Capabilities List \(TCL\)](#). Both of those documents were released in 2007. The TCL identified 37 specific capabilities across four major mission areas – prevention, protection, response, and recovery. However, the [National Preparedness Goal](#) (issued in 2011) revised the capabilities goal to 31 across five mission areas (expanding the emphasis on community resilience by inclusion of a new “mitigation” mission area).

Over the past five years, the 578-page TCL has proved difficult both to navigate and to implement. The revised core capabilities list included in the National Preparedness Goal identifies fewer capabilities, in a simplified presentation with a greater degree of flexibility, which can be used to identify what is needed in terms of planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercises (POETE) to

The nation's state and local governments are faced with the challenge of refining and expanding their preparedness levels across five distinct mission areas.

MORE IN STANDARDS

[Rising Waters & Tough Decisions](#)

[CHEMPACK 2.0: A Policy Roadmap](#)

[Checklists for All-Hazards Food Defense Planning](#)

[Redirecting Dual-Use Research Regulations](#)

[When the First Down Becomes the Worst Down](#)

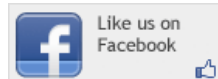
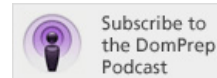
[Protecting the Milk Supply During a Foreign Animal Disease Outbreak](#)

[National Preparedness: Challenges, Definitions & Jurisdictions](#)

[Reauthorizing the Nation's Preparedness](#)

[Implementing PPD-8: New Opportunities, Greater Challenges](#)

[Protecting Responders From the Known and Unknown](#)



achieve and/or improve preparedness.

A Forest of Acronyms on the Road to Full Implementation

The first full exposure most state and local governments had to the core capabilities was in preparing their State Preparedness Reports (SPRs) for 2011 (before that, states were not required to define their core capabilities) and, to a greater degree, their 2012 Threat/Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments (THIRAs). Both the SPRs and the THIRAs are required to maintain eligibility for the DHS grants. Those preliminary tasks facilitated the later incremental rollout of overall national preparedness concepts. In their submission of the 2012 THIRAs and SPRs, states and urban areas participating in DHS's Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) set performance targets for each of the 31 core capabilities and are now annually required to assess levels of preparedness against those same targets.

With the planned release, later this year, of additional capability guidance, states and urban areas will probably repeat last year's THIRA/SPR process in 2013 – but in accordance with more specific instructions to assess what resources they now possess and what additional resources they will still need to achieve their individual contributions to the National Preparedness Goal.

Whether or not states and jurisdictions participating in the UASI program used previously existing coordinating structures, or developed a new preparedness process, the volume of preparedness data already being gathered as part of the THIRA/SPR requirement is or could be very valuable. PPD-8 has provided a straightforward methodology that also serves as a much needed refresher course in how to assess and “strategize” the management of risk. Decision-making officials at all levels of government now have a much clearer picture of capability strengths – areas for improvement as well – that they can use to develop and justify the expenditure of limited resources and increasingly scarce homeland security funds.

New Risks & Challenges

Several additional challenges are sure to arise in implementing PPD-8 at the state and local levels. The first challenge arises from the fact that several core capabilities cover such a broad range of preparedness activities that it is extremely difficult: (a) to set an overarching target; and (b) to assign responsibility for the development and evaluation of rather wide-ranging core capabilities. An example of a core capability that is extremely complex is what is described, in the National Preparedness Goal, as Public and Private Services and Resources. This capability encompasses but is not necessarily limited to firefighting resources, private industry, volunteer organizations, fuel resources, and generator assets. Because of the wide range of response activities provided by those resources, there is a risk of the core capability being oversimplified during implementation.

Another important challenge is that, for many agencies and planners, planning based on core capabilities represents a significant shift in emergency preparedness planning – which in the past had typically been based on: (a) specific threats and hazards (scenario-based planning); and/or (b) emergency support functions (ESFs – i.e., functional planning). To manage this shift in planning methodology, a “phased” education that implements necessary/mandated changes more gradually – again, at all levels of government – seems probable. Unfortunately, at the present time there is little federal support for training related to PPD-8.

Whether the next (FY 2014) federal budget will provide additional funding has yet to be determined. Nonetheless, it seems obvious that future federal training courses should be designed to ensure that the educational preparedness program that practitioners need for a true core-capability-based planning system is as effective as possible.

Additional and more effective national preparedness guidance also is needed. Because PPD-8 is still in the initial stages of implementation, there are few, if any, best practices to help guide planning efforts. More federal guidance also is needed to assist development of best practices at the state level. Such federal guidance may at least help to bridge the gap between the federal and state levels.

The lack of best practices and federal guidance becomes most apparent when trying to integrate the PPD-8 concepts into operational planning. According to PPD-8, “The frameworks shall be built upon scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordinating structures to align key roles and responsibilities to deliver the necessary capabilities.” They also must be capable of being adaptable to any

jurisdiction. Those goals will be difficult to meet at a time when states are finding it challenging to merge core capabilities into the existing ESF coordination model. Determining how ESFs and core capabilities relate to one another – and how to set core-capability-based objectives and mission tasks during operations – is a daunting challenge.

The Active Art of Watchful Waiting

However, in spelling out the rationale postulated and processes needed for response-based capabilities, FEMA provided an interagency consequence management plan, which includes core-capability-based courses of action, for the 2013 presidential inauguration. That plan and the entire plan development process may usefully serve as “best practice” examples of how to incorporate core capabilities into response planning until the White House releases a comprehensive federal interagency operations plan. Although the 2013 Presidential Inauguration Interagency Consequence Management Plan provided guidance for incorporating core capabilities into response planning and operational response, guidance on the other mission areas is still needed.

PPD-8 provides a clear methodology to help state and local governments improve and expand their preparedness levels across five distinct mission areas. Despite challenges in implementing the PPD-8 concepts, that directive does provide an improved preparedness program that can be of significant benefit to state and local governments. Hopefully, further federal guidance will reduce some of the implementation challenges to state and local governments for translating core capability preparedness into operational planning.

The early adopters are carefully working their way through the numerous and frequently complicated planning and implementation issues involved. The practitioners, meanwhile – not only planners and policy makers but also receivers, responders, managers, and others who will have to put the plans and decisions into action – are thinking about: what has to be done; how it should be done; and what obstacles might still be in the way. Adopting a wait-and-see approach is undoubtedly frustrating, but those responsible for future implementation will be that much better informed in the months and years to come.

Amanda Faul, a policy analyst with the University of Maryland’s Center for Health & Homeland Security, currently works as a regional planner for the Maryland Emergency Management Agency. Prior to assuming her current post, she worked as a disaster planner for the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California. She holds a Master’s degree in public health, with a concentration in emergency public health and disasters, from the University of California Los Angeles.

Significant contributions to this article were made by Jordan Nelms is the planning branch manager at the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, and previously worked as a contractor supporting the PPD-8 Program Executive Office at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He received a BA in political science/security studies from East Carolina University and pursued graduate studies at The Johns Hopkins University, the University of South Florida, and University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

Share This: 

Home | First Responder | Medical Response | Government | Industry | Infrastructure | Commentary | Training
DomPrep Journal | About Us | DomPrep40 | Advertise | Webinars | Reports | Grants | Resilience | Calendar of Events

All content copyright ©2014 DomesticPreparedness.com. Privacy Policy and Disclaimer. Problems with your account?