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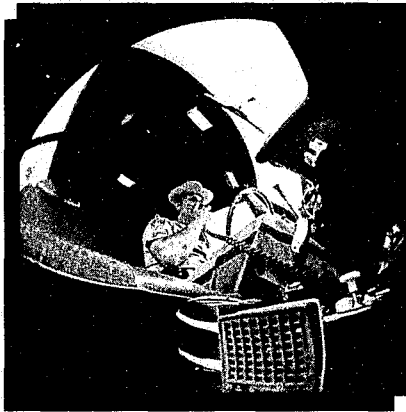
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Bulletin

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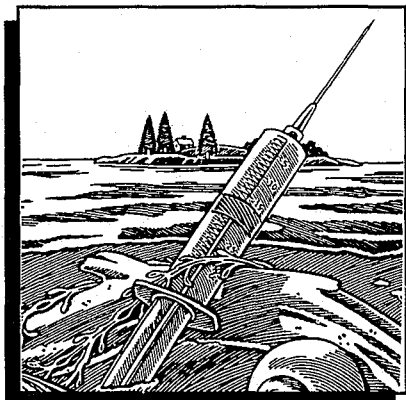
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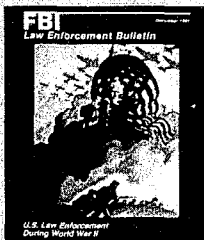


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Cover: The Bulletin commemorates the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor with an article describing the changes on American law enforcement brought about by World War II. All posters and photos used with this article were obtained from the National Archives.

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Hazardous Waste Spills

Police-Community Cooperation

By
DOUGLAS A. SPRAGUE
and
HENRY J. PIEKARSKI



For local public safety officials, meeting day-to-day community public safety requirements is often a frustrating task that becomes more and more difficult each year. Oftentimes, there are no resources available to respond to catastrophic events, such as hazardous waste spills. This article discusses a low-cost program that the Sayreville, New Jersey, Police Department implemented to tap community resources and to

deal effectively with hazardous waste emergencies.

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEES

Under Title III of the Federal Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), passed by Congress in 1986, each community must create a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) with representation from industry, local government, and the community

to deal with hazardous waste crises.¹ Specifically, each committee should set rules to include notification of committee activities and meetings and should discuss the emergency plan, comments and the committee's responses, and the distribution of the emergency plan to industry, local government, and the community.

Industry Participation

One of the first steps to organize an LEPC is to determine which area businesses should be included.

In order to do this, public safety officials must identify the industrial safety professionals from the community's largest employers and from firms that produce, use, import, or export hazardous materials. These professionals can provide technical guidance regarding the toxic materials present within their communities, risk assessments, areas of potential concern, and information concerning the impact on vehicle traffic flow in the affected areas.

Industrial safety professionals can also provide information on the development of internal health and safety policies and procedures, security personnel, industrial fire brigades, expanded first aid response, and trained hazardous materials response teams. This information can be integrated into the LEPC's overall resource capability. Knowledge concerning each of these areas is critical to effective and efficient governmental response, and unfortunately, is often overlooked in initial planning steps.

Government Participation

In addition to industry, law enforcement must also identify the appropriate government agencies to include in the LEPC based upon their practical knowledge, experience, and their access to primary policymakers and external resources. During a crisis, it is the responsibility of these government agencies to provide for:

- Traffic control
- Evacuation
- Police patrol



Chief Sprague commands the Sayreville, New Jersey, Police Department.



Detective Lieutenant Piekarski is also with the Sayreville, New Jersey, Police Department.

- Fire response
- Emergency medical and rescue response
- Public and environmental health
- Public works
- Engineering
- Code enforcement
- Schools
- Purchasing
- Transportation, and
- Social services.

Senior officials from the government agencies that provide for these services should also be organized into various task forces to deal with policy, operations, and support services.

Community Involvement

While required by SARA, community involvement can be the

most difficult aspect of the LEPC to organize and control. Community involvement should include representatives from the local environmental commission, hospitals, amateur radio operators, and support groups, such as the auxiliary police, Red Cross, Salvation Army, and local professional associations.

For maximum control and accountability, community groups should also be involved in the goal-setting process from the beginning. Having community groups participate in this process helps to prevent or alleviate any adversarial relationships that could develop between the community groups and authorized government agencies.

COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

After all the participants in the LEPC have been organized, the first meeting should be conducted under the direction of the chief law enforcement official and a designated

industrial leader. This meeting's agenda must include completing a community risk profile, a discussion of resource capabilities, and a community crisis impact

centers of operation. Most communities designate the police or fire chief as the on-scene commander.

In addition, the LEPC must also choose a site for an emergency

systems. This could include a series of specialized telephone lines to reduce the load through the dispatch center and for command and rumor control.

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Local paraprofessional support forces, such as auxiliary police, can be of great benefit...if they have been properly trained.

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analysis. Subsequent meetings should be hosted by corporate safety professionals.

Additionally, in order for the representatives from government agencies to better understand the corporate atmosphere, corporate safety professionals should arrange for the group to tour their respective facilities. Also, any joint training sessions should be scheduled well enough in advance so that as many as possible can attend.

Command and Control

After the LEPC has established its goals, members must develop policies and a planning document that outline which governmental officials will be accountable for the various response elements mandated under SARA. Completed planning documents must be examined to ensure compliance to SARA and that all goals are attained uniformly. Authority should also be delineated clearly to eliminate any possible confusion. Leaders are necessary for the on-scene command post, forward command post, and central command

operations center, because for large-scale crisis situations, it may be necessary to conduct policy and support functions at an off-site location. In many cases, if the community has a properly equipped emergency operations center, this would be the logical site for the central command center, the forward command post, and the service commanders. However, if this facility does not meet operating criteria, either another site must be selected or finances must be committed to upgrade the facility.

Communications System Expansion

Oftentimes, increased field-level communications as a result of an emergency situation reduces the capability of a community's communications system. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritize radio traffic and establish alternate command channels. Computer-based systems can help to reduce the overall load on a system and provide a record of all transactions. Similarly, telephone communications will also require the augmentation of existing

Support Forces

Local paraprofessional support forces, such as auxiliary police, can be of great benefit in crisis situations if they have been properly trained. Trained supplementary forces, under the supervision of professionals, free more personnel to work within the crisis area by performing less critical duties, such as traffic control and operating amateur radios. The Red Cross, Salvation Army, veterans groups, and churches can also provide needed manpower and resources to perform necessary tasks, such as operating evacuation centers.

CONCLUSION

With today's ever-increasing budgetary constraints, local public safety officials must look for more effective and creative uses for their community's resources when dealing with emergency situations. Without community resources of personnel and equipment, public safety forces will be hard pressed to maintain their level of service during large-scale crises. But, with the right indepth planning and increased community involvement, community needs can be addressed effectively and inexpensively.

LEB

Footnote

¹Federal Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, Pub. L. 99-499, Sec. 301, 100 Stat 1729 (1986); 42 U.S.C. sect. 11001 et seq.