



City of Seattle
Office of the Mayor

News

For Immediate Release
June 10, 2010

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Mayor McGinn, Police Chief Diaz, Fire Assistant Chief Hepburn and Office of Emergency Management Director Barb Graff discuss City's Emergency Preparedness

SEATTLE— Today, Mayor Mike McGinn, Police Chief Diaz and Director of the Office of Emergency Management (EOC) Barb Graff were at the City's Emergency Operations Center to outline the City of Seattle's recent emergency preparedness milestones. Some accomplishments of the Office of Emergency Management that were highlighted today:

Seattle is one of only 10 sites in the nation to benefit from \$6.6 million in federal grants for emergency management. These grants were used to improve emergency plans in the Puget Sound region to meet the needs of a Hurricane Katrina-level catastrophe. As a result, we now have systems in place to provide mutual aid to nursing homes, a concept for recovering our transportation system, a plan to track and manage a dramatic increase in people seeking hospital care through pre-hospital treatment, and a system for resource management and logistics. The planning process began in 2009 and will continue through July of 2014.

The EOC is in the final stages of preparing an earthquake-specific annex (or addendum) to the City's already adopted and approved Seattle Disaster Readiness and Response Plan, and has conducted several earthquake-focused, large-scale training exercises - Sound Shake 2008, Sound Shake 2010 and upcoming Evergreen 2012.

Public education programs in emergency preparedness through the EOC have had record levels of participation since the Chile, New Zealand, and Japan earthquakes. New programs have been conducted in multiple languages, with awareness and sensitivity to multiple cultures. Seattle Neighborhoods Actively Prepare (SNAP) has conducted trainings in libraries in all 13 neighborhood districts. We have engaged immigrant and refugee community leaders to become trainers themselves as well as preparing low-income housing managers to help their tenants access services in the case of an emergency.

For the first time since the implementation of emergency management programs in Seattle, we have created an opportunity for people to volunteer to help get the community better prepared. This includes Community Emergency Response Team training which will commence this fall.

Emergency Operations classes now cover beginning, intermediate, advanced, section-specific and logistics training.

The EOC also conducted a cooperative planning exercise with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense in response to a scenario involving the intentional release of weaponized anthrax in downtown Seattle and the base of Joint Base Lewis McChord. This was the first of this kind of planning in the nation for this type of bio-terrorism.

Mayor McGinn says, "Public safety is the first responsibility of government, and emergency preparedness is essential to ensuring that all Seattleites can feel safe and secure no matter what. I am proud of the work our Emergency Operations Center has done to prepare our city for a major catastrophe. We looked at real world events like New Zealand and Japan to learn from their experiences and improve our plans. There's always more work to be done, but these steps have brought us a lot closer to our public safety goals."