

Defiance County General Health District Emergency Response Plan

Introduction

The Defiance County General Health District has a responsibility to provide services to the community during a disaster in the appropriate manner to minimize human injury and suffering. A health department plan is essential to effectively interface with the community, state and national partners during a disaster. Standard operation guides are needed so that local health department staff can effectively respond to and fulfill their obligations during a disaster.

An emergency response plan for an agency is a preplanned guide that provides generic responses to emergency situations. The Emergency Response Plan for the Defiance County General Health District is developed with the intent to provide guidance to health department staff in the event a community emergency occurs and is not intended to be totally definitive for all potential emergency situations.

Local Health Department Legal Base of Authority

Ohio Administrative Code 3701-36-22 states that for health departments to comply with optimal standards for the local health department shall:

1. Ensure an adequate and appropriate response by the local health department personnel to disasters occurring within the jurisdiction by:
 - A. Developing an emergency response plan for use during a disaster;
 - B. Coordinating the plan with community's overall plan developed by the county commissioners and Emergency Management Agency;
 - C. Ensuring that all local health department personnel are knowledgeable of the plan;
 - D. Ensuring that equipment and supplies necessary to deal with a disaster are readily available;
2. Promote community awareness regarding disaster preparedness by implementing a public information plan.

Performance Indicators

The Ohio Administrative Code identifies performance indicators for health departments to identify their ongoing activities relevant to the disaster plan. These indicators are:

1. Existence of a written plan;
2. Evidence of coordination with the disaster service agency;
3. Evidence of regular review of the plan;
4. List of sources of equipment and supplies; and
5. Description of community program and evaluation of the program.

Hazard Analysis for Defiance County

There are two (2) general categories of severity of events such as localized (small scale disasters) in which state Emergency Operation Center (EOC) are not necessary and large scale disasters in which state EOC is activated following an emergency order by the Governor.

A hazard analysis for Defiance County identifies the following as potential natural disasters:

1. Floods (high risk)
2. Tornadoes/High Winds (medium risk)
3. Severe Storms, including winter storms (high risk)
4. Drought (medium risk)
5. Heat Waves (medium risk)
6. Earthquakes (low risk)
7. Major Fires (high risk)

There is also the risk from additional threats, such as:

1. War related incidents (low risk)
2. Terrorist activities using weapons of mass destruction, such as biological, nuclear, or chemical agents (low risk)
3. Hazardous Materials/Transportation Incidents (medium risk)
4. Civil Disorder (low risk)

In either category, the Defiance County General Health District is concerned with protecting the public health to all residents. It is the responsibility of the Defiance County General Health District to assist the Defiance County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) in implementing the County Emergency Operations Plan.

Phases of Emergency Management

The primary goals of emergency management are to save lives and protect property by developing appropriate operational capabilities. Reaching these goals is facilitated by dividing emergency management activities in the following categories: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Mitigation:

Mitigation activities are those activities designed to either prevent the occurrence of an emergency or long term activities to minimize the potentially adverse effects of an emergency. Such activities include but are not limited to:

- A. Assess for health risks
- B. Review and upgrade safety plans
- C. Immunize/vaccinate county residents against diseases
- D. Provide continuous health inspections

- E. Prepare a general prophylaxis/mass immunization plan for the management of large numbers of people in a short time to prevent the transmission of illness or manage the effects of hazardous material exposure
- F. Develop and maintain an updated list of volunteers to assist if needed in mass prophylaxis/mass immunization clinics
- G. Perform regular testing of the Health Alert Network for rapid communication of health emergencies
- H. Review the local infrastructure and update as needed
- I. Anticipate potential health emergencies
- J. Practice emergency response plans so it is familiar territory

Preparedness:

Preparedness activities, programs, and systems are those that exist prior to an emergency and are used to support and enhance response to an emergency or disaster. Planning training exercises are among the activities conducted in this phase.

- A. Train staff in incident command and in public health emergency response
- B. Conduct exercises to test the readiness capabilities of the health department and provide experience in emergency response
- C. Provide public education regarding health risks (i.e.: brochures, pamphlets, websites, videos, public presentations)
- D. Provide ongoing surveillance and risk assessment for disease symptoms or cluster outbreaks
- E. Prevent epidemics and spread of disease
- F. Protect against environmental hazards
- G. Prepare procedures to monitor and implement control measures of environmental conditions within the community
- H. Work with the Red Cross regarding sheltering needs of the community in the event of evacuation or displacement
- I. Prevent injuries through safety training and monitoring
- J. Promote and encourage healthy behaviors
- K. Establish protocols for handling and distribution of the Strategic National Stockpile
- L. Establish risk communication plan for communicating with the media, the public and other health care providers in an emergency
- M. Recognize unusual events that might indicate an emergency and describe appropriate action
- N. Coordination with the Ohio Department of Health for rapid testing of biological threat agents during bioterrorist events
- O. Regularly test equipment, including MARCS radios, Walkie-talkies, and Teamspeak
- P. Develop and maintain relationship with community partners through participation in exercises, LEPC and other events and activities

Response:

Response is activities and programs designed to address the immediate and short term effects of the onset of an emergency or disaster. It helps to reduce the casualties and damage and to speed recovery. Response activities include direction and control, warning, evacuation and other similar operations.

- A. Provide ongoing surveillance and risk assessment
- B. Implement emergency response plans and implement the incident command system and assign roles as appropriate and needed.
- C. Implement risk communication plans, with information regarding risk exposure and dissemination of information to educate the public and community partners regarding exposure risk and effective public response
- D. Provide environmental surety (i.e. provide safe drinking water, provide for effective disposal or removal of dead animals, provide procedures for cleaning of houses and public buildings), collect environmental samples and perform surveys
- E. Assist in the collection of appropriate specimen collection and transport to appropriate laboratory for testing when necessary
- F. Respond to disasters and assist communities in recovery
- G. Provide field staff for support staff
- H. Request and coordinate local distribution of Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)
- I. Provide for mass prophylaxis/mass immunization when needed
- J. Disseminate notifiable diseases information and reporting requirements and procedures to healthcare providers on a periodic basis
- K. Participate in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) as appropriate
- L. Establish and maintain contact with Ohio Department of Health as necessary and appropriate
- M. Conduct debriefing of staff and assess staff needs.

Recovery:

Recovery is the phase that involves restoring systems to normal. Short term recovery actions are taken to assess the damage and return vital life support systems to minimum operating standards; long term recovery actions may continue for months or possibly even for years.

- A. Compile record of events
- B. Support recovery operations
- C. Provide ongoing surveillance and risk assessment
- D. Provide ongoing public education and support
- E. Provide ongoing environmental surety
- F. Conduct debriefing of staff and assess staff needs
- G. Conduct an After Action Analysis