

TRB Critical and Cross-Cutting Issue

Emergency Preparedness

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Lead POG Member:

Jeff Western, jeffrey.western@tds.net

Specific, focused, sub-issues (phrased as questions):

- What are appropriate roles and responsibilities for transportation agencies in preparing, responding, and recovering from natural and man-made disasters?
- How do transportation agencies interact, coordinate, and communicate with other agencies, including DHS, TSA, FBI, etc., as well as other local agencies. Are there good models for emergency preparedness and command during emergencies?
- What differences are there in the appropriate approaches based on the type of emergency?
- What approaches are needed to address the transportation needs of special groups (elderly, disabled, women, children, etc.)?
- What methods should be used to communicate with the public about the transportation system before, during, and after an emergency?
- Are there tools and technologies that can be used to assist with preparing, responding, and recovering from emergencies? How can these tools and technologies be introduced and sustained in transportation agencies?
- What is the role of Transportation agencies in support of the National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP)?

Why is this a strategic issue now?

Protecting our nation's critical infrastructure and key resources (CI/KR) is vital to our national security, of which Transportation is a Critical Sector. There are challenging requirements for transportation agencies/organizations for determining, understanding, and implementing solutions in protecting the nation's critical transportation infrastructure. The National Response Plan (NRP) and National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) provide direction and requirements for transportation agency implementation, including the development of Emergency Support Function (ESFs) for Federal, State and Local transportation agencies. Transportation agency/organization expectations are not yet matched by the capability. This gap between expectation and capability increases risk and calls for the best strategic direction and R&D available in reaching agency capability. As an example, to achieve unified command with other organizations responding to an emergency, transportation agencies need to incorporate the Incident Command System into planning, training, and cooperative exercises. Specific issues such as implementing the National Incident Management System (NIMS) / Incident Command System (ICS), or introducing innovative tools and technologies may be meaningfully addressed in the context of the strategic issue of meeting expected emergency response functions.

What should POG do to highlight this issue?

To highlight this strategic issue, the Policy and Organization Group can first draw upon the diverse institutional and interdisciplinary competencies required for effective Unified Command during an emergency. This includes transportation insight into capabilities and constraints at all levels of government and the private sector. Also, critical Research and Development needs to be identified. Building on this foundation, a brief can be prepared on the role of transportation to all critical systems. The brief can be shared among the TRB community, and can help inform transportation, public safety and other emergency response organizations. The brief can be configured in a variety of formats depending on the audience, applied at each step in the plan, train and exercise process, and shared with all involved in emergency response.