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Incident Command: All Hazards Emergency Planning

--CDP Public Affairs

Emergency responders training in today's climate are among some of the brightest citizens prepared to protect the nation and its territories. Responders are better educated and receive the most up-to-date training available.

The mere mention of a planning and response course may be enough to steer the most seasoned responder in another direction. Although planning makes up a large part of this course's relevance, it's the incident command foundation and focus on problem solving that prepares communities across the nation for CBRNE incidents.

The WMD Incident Command: Capabilities, Planning and Response Actions (IC) course focuses community planning towards the preparedness effort in response to a CBRNE event. The use of chemical, biological, or other WMD materials is a worst-case scenario for any community. But Emergency Response Plans of all types may be adapted to any hazard.

Upon completing the course, responder students leave the IC course with the ability to provide a positive impact to the preparedness efforts in their jurisdiction by sharing the tools to draft effective plans. Preparedness plans are not only government mandated; they set the tone for response success following an accident or manmade event.

"Just having a plan on the shelf doesn't always satisfy the requirement," said Barry Williams, IC instructor. "The plan provides the response framework and the incident command training assists response personnel in making educated decisions, by anticipating possible outcomes. As the ones in charge of the response, we owe it to our communities to get the best training available and develop solid plans."

"We have had city managers, planners and mayors join the traditional responders who train at the CDP," said Mike Aguilar, CDP training specialist. "These community leaders and responders see the need for strong response plans, and truly want their communities prepared. The CDP Incident Command training provides these community leaders and responders with a unique opportunity to work together in developing emergency plans for complex all-hazard incidents."

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Incident Command (Cont.)

The 24-hour course culminates with a six-hour exercise that requires the most seasoned responder veteran, volunteer force, and sometimes, new academy recruits to share information. According to Donnie Belser, training manager, the goal of the course is to bring all responders together in a single setting.

“The course is designed in a manner to give all disciplines, from cities large and small, the opportunity to identify emergency resources they need as well as a model to identify shortfalls,” added Belser. “The course prepares those who work in command and support roles to better serve and protect their community.”

“Communities are graded on the potential effectiveness of their response plans,” added Williams. “Community managers will be found liable if a response plan is inadequate. This training gives them an edge in drafting plans and providing relevant input to the variety of incidents that could affect us all.”

An added bonus to the IC course is the Hands-on-Training (HOT) course. HOT provides the responder with the opportunity to experience an environment using GB or VX nerve agent at the CDP’s Chemical, Ordnance, Biological, and Radiological Training Facility (COBRATF) . The IC course is one of many courses that combine HOT training at the COBRATF—the only facility of its kind in the nation that offers toxic training for civilian responders.

The CDP is located in Anniston, Ala., and funds courses for state, local, and tribal response personnel, including travel, meals, and lodging. Learn more about other training opportunities at <http://cdp.dhs.gov> or call 866-213-9553.