



Hazard Management Cayman Islands

Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016

Executive Summary

HMCI strategic plan outlines the agency's outlook in the next five years and illustrates the main strategies as goals that will guide the agency. The Plan is aligned with the priorities set by the Portfolio of Internal Affairs and ultimately the Government. The Plan establishes strategic goals and objectives for the enhancement and fulfillment of the agency's mandate to meet the realistic expectations of Cayman's society and its international partners.

HMCI's vision is to develop a strong and adaptable national disaster management system that better leverages existing national capabilities in enhancing the country's resilience to hazards. The Plan outlines the responsibility for individual preparedness and importance of public and private sector partnerships in mitigating all hazard risks. The Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure its appropriateness, and efficient and effective use of the country's resources.

The full support of the government through its policies and resource allocations will be critical in achieving the stated goals identified in the strategic plan and the success of the agency.

Introduction

Hazard Management Department Cayman Islands has overall responsibility for the national Comprehensive Disaster Management programme, including preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery. HMCI is responsible for the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), which is activated to direct and coordinate the response to national threats. HMCI also has responsibility for maintaining the National Hazard Management plans for threats such as hurricanes and earthquakes.

Vision

A Comprehensive Disaster Management Program through National approach to hazard management, that will facilitate and co-ordinate the development and implementation of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

Mission Statement

Enhance the Cayman Islands resiliency to disaster with full community participation. This will involve participation in the National approach to Hazard Management through mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery thereby ensuring the preservation of human life, property and economic recovery.

Organizational History

The Cayman Islands has had an Official Hurricane Plan since the early 1970s. Regular revision kept the plan current and lessons learned from Hurricane Ivan in 2004 changed the approach to Disaster Management.

The Cayman Islands National Strategic Plan 1998 -2008 lists "comprehensive contingency planning" and establishment of a "national emergency management agency" among its strategies. The document also mentions prevention and mitigation as desirable activities to be undertaken to safeguard the country. The proposal for a national agency with a comprehensive mandate to lead the risk management process is therefore in keeping with the plans for national development.

In January 2007, Hazard Management Cayman Islands was established as the government agency responsible for coordination of all programs dealing with national disasters, whether natural or man-made and implementing the National Hurricane Plan. The National Hurricane Committee was transitioned to the National Hazard Management Council.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- The strengthening and enhancement of established and new mechanisms use in the disaster risk management process. (WebEOC, Seismic stations , Automated weather stations)
- Quick decision making
- Well established and cohesive working relationships with government entities , volunteers & other regional disaster agencies
- Committed and motivated staff
- Strong Management support for further training of staff
- Use of "Advanced Technology"
- Management easily adapts to an ever changing environment.

Weaknesses

- Inadequate staff level
- Slow process to ratify legislation – legal authority

- The lack of a purpose built to ensure continuity of emergency response operations for a disaster
- Limited cross training of staff
- Moderate level of public awareness of the function of the agency and general community preparedness.
- Current NEOC Facility inadequate for major disaster events responses

Opportunities

- Fully staff agency with personnel with the necessary experience & knowledge
- Strengthen relationships with media houses and other private organizations
- Incorporation of OFTEL functions and staff into HMCI's functions and operations to achieve more efficient management of government's emergency communication network in "peace time" and or disaster, emergency response times
- Work closer with the public , including schools to ensure public awareness and training
- Construction of a purpose built building – NEOC – to facilitate the management of all disaster events.
- Cross train current staff and ensure Succession Planning

Threats

- The occurrence of a severe emergency or disaster event that present NEOC facility cannot manage
- Further Budget cuts
- The lost of valuable staff that are trained and well experience (Brain Drain)

Goals

- DEVELOP A STATE OF THE ART NEOC FOR THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
- IMPROVE THE SHELTER ENVIRONMENT FOR CAYMAN ISLAND'S POPULATION
- IMPROVE THE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS
- INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING
- ENHANCE THE COUNTRY'S RESILIENCE
- PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE REDUCTION OF RISK AND VULNERABILITY
- DEVELOP & COORDINATE ADDITIONAL DISASTER PLANS
- STRENGTHEN EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

Key Strategies to Achieve Goals

Development of "Purpose Built" building for the efficient management and safety of emergency management systems

- Continue the development of the NEOC building to house HMCI, 911 Emergency Communications Centre and Office of Telecommunications. This will consolidate all emergency management Command and Coordination entities in a modern hazard resilient infrastructure with all necessary amenities to response to the most adverse hazard occurrence.

Ensure the best possible Shelter Environment for the population of the Cayman Islands through continued development and enhancement of infrastructure and equipment.

- Complete Emergency Shelter standby generator upgrade
- Standardize all shelters to a national uniformed standard were shelters will be accessible to all persons (physically challenged) and all services provided at all shelters (EMC).
- Provision of appropriate items to support the occupancy of shelters, (provision of cots, blankets and other comfort items).
- Continue the use of technology to improve shelter management and the management of the facilities. Implementation of remote monitors, registration and communications aids.
- Develop appropriate facilities to shelter pets

Ensure that the Islands have adequate Early Warning and Notification systems for all hazards (Improving Early Warning Systems).

- Complete AWS program – acquisition and installation of instruments in strategic locations across the islands.
- Maintain seismic network
- Build a network of wave and tide monitors
- Installation of EMWIN in HMCI – enhancing the accessibility and timing of hazard information to guide preparedness and response activities.
- Incorporate all technological medium available locally into existing and new early notification mechanisms.

Institutional Capacity Strengthening to ensure delivery of high quality services and products to the country and other international, regional and sub regional partners. Institutional Capacity Strengthening will also enhance the technical competence of the agency to lead the Country's Disaster Risk Management Programme.

- Fully Staff agency

- Create the necessary environment and budgetary allocation for and to facilitate staff professional development. This includes academic studies; technical training and job function cross training.
- Ensure participation in regional sponsorship and training opportunities
- Improve inter agency cooperation through exercises, work programme and other DRM activities.
- Develop Succession Plan to ensure that the highest quality professional is maintained and the quality of services and products of the agency is maintained.
- Create the necessary systems for a national Disaster Risk Reduction activities and Incident occurrence archiving.

Enhance the country's resilience through an informed public and facilitate the strengthening of community resilience through organization and training. (Building Community Resilience)

- Continue and expand Hazard Risk Management Education programs in schools and community groups
- Enhance the existing framework for community preparedness and response, establishing "Community Emergency Response Teams" in every District.
- Facilitate and provide training and access to appropriate resources that will encourage "Community Preparedness and Mitigation".
- Develop national pool of volunteers and provide required training to enhance Urban Search and Rescue capacity

Provide guidance and a legal framework for the reduction of risk and vulnerability to the physical and built environment through mitigation.

- Development of a National Mitigation Plan / Policy. This will include a plan for implementation of existing and new research mitigation initiatives.
- Organize and prioritize the existing and recommended strategies from existing reports and lessons learnt (hurricane Ivan, Paloma, CI Vulnerability Capacity Assessment etc) to incorporate into the National Mitigation Plan / Policy.
- Continued development of the National Risk Registry from analytical review of the hazards and the risk posed.
- Enhance the GIS capability of the agency to develop necessary analysis of data and information that will inform the country vulnerability and risk assessment processes. Also in the production of products (hazards and risks maps) for both the technical and general community. This will require the upgrade of the office GIS infrastructure.
- Spatial data creation via GPS and analysis as deemed necessary in the National Mitigation Plan / Policy. Some of the data includes but is not limited to Hazardous Materials, Flow accumulation model.
- Further development of the HMCI mapping system with the provision of editing functionality so end user of HMCI mapping systems can have the ability to edit

their own spatial data (i.e. Petroleum Tanks, Deep Wells, and any other government users).

Plan Development

- National Disaster Plan, develop plans for all hazards
- Coordinate plan development for other agencies and emergencies

Emergency Communication

- Develop a National Emergency Radio Communication Plan
- Update radio communication network
- Improve emergency radio communication services to users

Service Needs & Gaps

Mitigation

- The post of Hazard Mitigation Officer is currently vacant at HMCI. This is an important role as it relates to hazard data collection, researching, analyzing and implementing strategies for reducing hazard vulnerability and building resilience. Ideally, HMCI should be contributing hazard vulnerability considerations and risk mapping assessments to the planning / development process. Without a Hazard Mitigation Officer this aspiration will not be realized.
- The effects of not having a Hazard Mitigation could result in avoidable impacts to human health, the economy and the physical infrastructure of the Cayman Islands. Informed hazard risk analysis to the planning and development process prior to construction could reduce their vulnerability and protected the economy from the subsequent shock and impact of their loss etc.
- Mitigation measures to reduce identified risk should be explicitly stated in all development applications and should be assessed by HMCI and technical agencies prior to final approval.
- A review of codes and development standards to better reflect the current understanding of the levels of vulnerability and to meet emerging and changing threats should be conducted periodically and HMCI should be involved in the process.

Lack of a National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC)

- The NEOC is a critical resource for coordinating the disaster response and recovery process. Currently HMCI does not have an appropriate facility for an EOC.

Seismic data analysis

- HMCI has state of the art seismographs but no local resource to scientifically analyzing the information that is generated following a seismic event. To fill this gap HMCI should secure Memorandum of understanding with an institution that have the capacity for a seismologist to promptly review, analyze and return data regarding the Magnitude and location of seismic events that large enough to be 'felt' in the Cayman Islands.

Legislation

- Adequate supporting legislation for disaster risk management structures, policies and procedures. The Disaster Preparedness and Hazard Management Bill has been produced and will formalize traditional practices, such as the ability to redeploy government employees to assist in a disaster and to utilize public buildings, equipment and vehicles for the response and recovery effort. Other components of the legislation include the ability to declare 'disaster zones' and thereby restrict public access to certain areas for the protection of life and safety of the citizens.

Dedicated Recovery Fund

- Provisions should be made for a disaster recovery fund. Allocations for disaster recovery should be included in the annual budget to assist with recovery mobilization in the immediate aftermath of an impact. If the budgetary allocation was not used, the amount should be allowed to accumulate in the Disasters Recovery Fund.

Conclusion

The Cayman Islands has in the past concentrated on hurricanes in its emergency management planning. There is however a growing recognition that although hurricanes may present the highest probability threat, other threats exist and must be planned for. The December 2004 magnitude 6.8 earthquake was a reminder that the country is vulnerable to this hazard.

It is vital, therefore, that a Comprehensive Disaster Management approach to managing the country's threats be adopted. Credible threats which must be addressed include major transportation accidents, earthquakes, major power failure, hazardous materials incidents, major fires, and major medical emergencies and epidemics.

The increasingly accepted effects of global climate change and the global reality of terrorism must also be factored into the country's hazard assessment as potential threats.

The responsibility for disaster management is not that of the government alone, each individual, business and community has a role to play in ensuring that the highest level of preparedness is achieved and the response to a disaster is effectively conducted.