Being Prepared

How Motor Vehicle Agencies Can Be Ready for the Next Emergency

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Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles
The Issue

• Every motor vehicle licensing and registration agency knows how valuable their services are to the motoring public and government.

• We know all drivers’ licenses and registrations have expiration dates that require service.

• Unfortunately, we don’t know when the next emergency will strike that will limit our ability to serve the public.
It’s “When”, Not “If” It Will Happen

• It’s a matter of “when”, not “if” an emergency event will occur and disrupt your operations.
• Connecticut DMV has experienced a hurricane, several major snowstorms, an earthquake and a bomb threat in the last two years.
• These events happen with little or no notice.
The Main Question

• What can we do to be best prepared and keep our agencies operating during the next emergency?

• The answer: A lot.

• Please allow me to take a few minutes to explain.
Overview

• Background
• Developing a Plan
• Forming a Team
• Training Staff
• Creating a Command Center
• Communicating
• After the incident
Super Storm ’11 Forces Additional Preparations

• In October 2011, a coastal storm struck Connecticut that dumped large amounts of snow and caused widespread, extended power outages.

• Immediately after the storm, the CT DMV created an internal committee to review its operational preparedness during storms and other emergencies.

• We needed to be better prepared.
Statewide Effort

• Connecticut has a State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
• The EOC coordinates and monitors operational capabilities of all state agencies.
• DMV, along with all other agencies, reports updates to EOC through conference calls and the Internet.
• Conference calls include emergency officials, the Governor’s Office and local municipal leaders.
Developing a Plan

• After the October 2011 storm, the CT DMV further developed a formal emergency management response manual.

• The manual serves as the blueprint for staying ahead of whatever your agency is facing.
What’s in a Plan?

• Take time to create an Emergency Management Response Manual.
• The Manual includes:
  – Command structure of the agency
  – Emergency contact telephone numbers
  – Emergency declarations
  – Defined roles and responsibilities for staff
  – A continuity plan that prioritizes functions
  – And anything else that makes you better prepared!
Form a Response Team

• A plan is worthless if you don’t have a team to execute it.

• CT DMV established a Continuity of Operations Program (COOP) Management Team.

• The team brings together all parts of the CT DMV in times of an emergency.

• Team members receive necessary supplies.
Who’s Essential?

• Emergencies are not convenient.
• Much of the response work will take place during “off” hours.
• Office closures and early dismissals can bring unintended consequences.
• Union rules and other human resource issues should be reviewed.
Training for Staff

- CT DMV participates in annual statewide exercise coordinated by Governor’s office.
- Test message alert systems – reverse 911 in place
- Senior managers and incident team members trained on emergency protocols.
- Use training exercises to determine what you need to best handle incidents
Secure Building Drill Recently Conducted

Staff came up with creative ways to respond to an emergency situation.
Creating a Command Center

- Designated meeting room to coordinate and manage agency.
- Team members setup with laptops with air cards and VPN keys.
- Room covered by generator power.
- Shatter proof film on exterior windows.
- Flat screen television monitors installed.
Access to Files and Supplies

- Command center is not dedicated 24/7 to emergencies.
- CT DMV utilizes a “Cart” system during incidents.
- Supplies and confidential information are stored and available in rolling, locked cart.
It’s “Go” Time

- Put your plan into motion – your preparation will pay off
- Assembling your incident management team
- Accessing the incident and its impact on operations
- Communicating information
Assemble Your Team

- Can you meet at your emergency operations center?
- If not, make remote teleconferencing available
- E-mail through mobile phones or laptops with air cards
Assessing the Incident

• Chain of command and communication are vital.
• Review your continuity plan and put it to work.
• Know the condition of your field offices – important for employees and customers.
Branch Office Checks

- All DMV facilities are checked during and after storms and disasters.
- Can check for power at an office remotely.
- Branch office camera systems set up for viewing from anywhere via IP addresses.
- DMV personnel have three response vans with equipment ready to go.
- DMV’s Commercial Vehicle Safety Inspectors issued keys to check branch offices.
Communication is Key

- When an emergency strikes, your agency needs to be able to communicate.
- This includes internal and external communication.
- Think local and global.
- Remember your customers!
- Don’t assume people know what’s happening.
Communicating with Employees

- Everbridge/reverse 911 system to communicate to various groups – ability to call and e-mail messages in timely fashion.
- Portable radios within DMV headquarters.
- Statewide radio frequency used by CT DMV’s Commercial Vehicle Safety Division.
Emergency Declarations

- Remember your statutory obligations.
- Declarations can be critical depending on the event.
- Be prepared to help save you time.

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Daniel P. Malloy
Governor of the State of Connecticut
FROM: Commissioner of Motor Vehicles Melody Currey
DATE: October 31, 2011
RE: Extension of Expiration Date or Period of Validity of Credential Issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles

Pursuant to section 14-5c of the Connecticut General Statutes, I am requesting your approval to extend the expiration date or period of validity of registrations, licenses, permits, certificates or other forms or credentials issued by or on behalf of the Department of Motor Vehicles in accordance with statute. This includes an extension of the time required to comply with emissions inspections done through emissions stations in the state. This action has become necessary due to the severe weather conditions which have affected travel within the state and have led to widespread power outages that may prevent the Department of Motor Vehicles or its contractors from opening to the public for the transaction of business.

Sections 14-5c authorizes me to take this action with your approval at any time when there is an emergency situation as described in section 28-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Your declaration of civil preparedness emergency issued on October 29, 2011 under the authority of section 28-9 of the Connecticut General Statutes meets the conditions of section 14-5c.

The extension will apply only to those credentials or other items referenced herein that expire on or after October 10, 2011, and will continue until further notice. The end date for this action will be determined after consultation with you, and will be specified in writing. Law enforcement personnel will be notified of the dates of implementation and termination of the extension.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.
Communicating with Customers

- Your website is your virtual storefront.
- Keep media informed. Short press releases can go a long way.
- When possible, signage at offices can be helpful.
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- Bull horns are used to direct customers.
Post-Event Debrief

- We learn from each incident.
- What went right – and what did not?
- Post-event debrief sessions are held with incident management team.
- To-do lists are created and completed to improve response measures.
Thank you!!
Any Questions?