

Activation of the National Ambulance Contract
Communications Exercise
After Action Report
August 13, 2013

Executive Summary

The purpose of the “no notice” communication/notification exercise was to provide the NASEMSO Notification Group as well as NASEMSO Regional Representatives with the opportunity to test the Emergency Notification Procedure when there is a potential that the National Ambulance Contract could be activated. The exercise was to be interactive and provide information to state EMS Directors of the potential for EMS resources to be deployed to a state whose EMS resources were overwhelmed.

The “NASEMSO EMS Director after Hours Emergency Contact List” was updated and disseminated to members for any additional updates prior to the exercise. In addition the Emergency Notification procedure was also sent out to State/Territory EMS Directors a week prior to the exercise.

Since this was a “no notice, after hours” exercise, only the Chair and Program Advisor for the Domestic Preparedness sub committee were aware of the date, time and scenario.

This exercise was one of the action items from the 2013 Strategic goals that the DP committee had listed.

Scenario:

The following was the scenario for this exercise:

On August 13, 2013 at approximately 1600 hours CST an emergency warning has gone out stating that there is the potential for a Category 5 Hurricane affecting Texas and states along the eastern coastline within the next 48 hours. The wind is blowing at 40 mph from the Northeast with wind gusts up to 80 miles per hour. The temperature is 98 degrees F and cloudy. The forecast calls for severe wind gusts and severe rain storms. There is a report that within the next 36 hours, there will be violent winds, incredible waves, torrential rains and floods. The news is reporting that a hurricane will be hitting the northeast coast of Texas and potentially, Louisiana, Mississippi and/or Alabama. The storm is predicted to be as violent as Storm Katrina and hit around 1800 hours on August 15th.

By then, the wind gusts are reporting to be over 100 mph causing major power outages, down electric wires and major building destruction.

According to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, it is predicted that this hurricane will be classified as a Category 5.

Looking ahead, Texas EMS, thru their EOC is asking that ambulances are going to be needed to assist in evacuation of long term care facilities and Senior Citizen buildings as well as a few hospitals. EMS resources needed include ambulances, EMT's and paramedics.

At 1900 (eastern) today there will be an emergency conference call between NASEMSO Leadership to include the executive committee, NASEMSO staff, federal partners and a representative from AMR. The purpose of this call is to provide an update on the pending hurricane and start planning to move EMS resources to or near the affected areas. There will also be an update provided from our Federal partners on any EMAC requests as well as an update from AMR on the activation/deployment of EMS resources and usage of the NAC.

Exercise Details:

Summary of Events:

At approximately 1900 EST, FEMA notified NASEMSO's Executive Director and Executive Vice President and President of NASEMSO via email and cell phone that EMS resources had been requested by Texas EMS and that the National Ambulance Contract was going to be activated in response to a potential Category 5 hurricane. FEMA requested that a conference call be convened.

Following the notification by FEMA, NASEMSO's Executive Director sent out, via email and cell phone text, notification of a conference call, including time and number to call, of the potential of activation of the National Ambulance Contract. A confirmation was requested that members had received this notification

At 2000 hours EST, NASEMSO Domestic Chair Joes Schmider began the teleconference and explained that this was an exercise and the overall purpose was to test NASEMSO's emergency notification system. Joe outlined the exercise scenario and then turned it over to Leslee Stein-Spencer acting as the FEMA representative. Leslee presented the scenario as a Category 5 hurricane and that the hurricane was anticipated to hit the Texas Gulf Coast within the next 48 hours. Joe and Leslee (as DP Program Advisor) instructed regional representatives to contact all their states in their region to provide an update of the situation. In addition, Leslee asked the regional representatives to confirm receipt of the notifications. The regional

representatives were also asked to email Leslee when all contacts had been made and notification completed.

Leslee informed the group that a survey was going to be emailed to them on Wednesday August 14th and encouraged the Notification Group to complete the survey.

There being no further questions or discussions, the call concluded at 1915

Present for the call were:

NASEMSO's Executive Director

NASEMSO's Executive Vice President

President of NASEMSO

President-elect

D.P. Chair

D.P. Program Advisor

Regional Representatives from the following: North Central, East and West,

Absent:

South Central

Strengths of the exercise:

The following are the positive findings that were identified from the exercise:

- The procedure "Activation of the National Ambulance Contract" that was developed was a successful way to communicate information of a major incident where EMS resources may be deployed
- Most identified members on the notification group participated in this exercise.
- All state EMS Offices were notified of an impending ambulance deployment and actively participated in the exercise
- The communication exercise validated the need for this Activation of the National Ambulance Contract procedure and the importance of maintain an accurate, up-to-date emergency contact list.

Lessons Learned/Areas of Improvement

- NASESMO State EMS Directors notification contact list must be updated and all state directors should be encouraged to provide emergency contact and notification information. The contact list should be updated minimally every 6 months

- An “off-hours” notification drill should be conducted next year and FEMA and AMR should be encouraged to participate
- Regional Representatives should include their alternates as part of the notification and exercise in order to assure their awareness as well as serve as a backup when the Regional Representative is not available

Next Steps:

- The Emergency Notification Procedure should be revised based on findings and disseminated to State/Territory EMS Offices.
- NASEMSO Director’s contact list should be updated and disseminated every 6 months at a minimum. The DP Program Advisory should update the list when notified of a change of state EMS Director.