



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Emergency Management

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To: The Honorable Mark R. Warner, Governor of Virginia
Members of the Virginia General Assembly

From: Michael M. Cline, State Coordinator

Subject: **Annual Report on Local Assessments and Local Emergency Operations Plans**

Enclosed you will find the Virginia Department of Emergency Management's report, Local Capability Assessment for Readiness (LCAR) and status of local Emergency Operations Plans (EOP's), as required by the General Assembly.

The LCAR is a nationally recognized tool to assist localities in assessing the operational readiness and capabilities of the local and State emergency management partnership to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all types of disasters. This assessment covers local political subdivisions only; this is not a State assessment.

During FY 2003-2004, cities, counties, and incorporated towns received All Hazards Planning Grant Funds to conduct an LCAR and to develop/revise local EOP's. As a result, 79.28% of the Commonwealth's 140 jurisdictions have current EOP's, an increase of approximately 15% over a two-year period.

Additional information on LCAR and local EOP's may be obtained by contacting Judy Cooling, Local Planning Assistance Program Manager at 804-897-6500, extension 6524 or by pager, through the Virginia Emergency Operations Center at 804-674-2400.

If I can be of additional assistance, or if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for the opportunity to report our results.

MMC/jwc

Cc: The Honorable John Marshall
Angela S. Murphy

Enclosures

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Local Capability Assessment for Readiness And Status of Local Emergency Operations Plans

2005 Report to the Governor and General Assembly

This report meets the requirement of the Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws of 2000, as amended, Code Sections 44-146.19, paragraph F, which reads *“All political subdivisions shall provide an annually updated emergency management assessment to the State Coordinator of Emergency Management on or before July 1 of each year.”* **(NOTE: This assessment covers local political subdivisions only; this is not a State assessment.)** This report also meets the requirement of Section 44-146.18 (b)(3), Code of Virginia --- Annual report on the status of emergency management response plans throughout the Commonwealth and measures taken or recommended to prevent, respond to and recover from disasters.

Purpose

The purpose of the Local Capability Assessment for Readiness (LCAR) is to provide a self-assessment instrument for a local jurisdiction to identify its emergency management program strengths and areas of improvement, provide a forum for collaborative dialogue between local and state emergency management agencies, and assist the State in accurately assessing the status of its partnership with each of its local emergency management jurisdictions.

Background

Cities and counties within the Commonwealth received All Hazards Planning Grant Funds during 2003-2004 to conduct an assessment and to update their Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The seven incorporated towns that maintain an independent emergency management organization were included in their respective county's funding. Of the 140 jurisdictions in the Commonwealth, 79.28% (or 111) have a current Emergency Operations Plan. This represents an approximate increase of 15% over a two-year period (Individual results of LCAR assessments and EOP's are available upon request).

The LCAR instrument was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and it's professional partners, the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) and International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) to assist localities in assessing the operational readiness and capabilities of the local and State emergency management partnership to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all types of disasters.

The LCAR instrument incorporates the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1600 *Recommended Practice for Disaster Management* standards into

the assessment. The NFPA 1600 standards are also incorporated into the national Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP).

Need for Assessment

It is critical that emergency management organizations have a well-defined, recognized assessment instrument, such as the LCAR, that can be used to help evaluate their operational effectiveness and compliance to standards.

Some of the major reasons/benefits for performing an emergency management assessment at the local level are as follows:

1. Allows for continuous improvement, including strategic planning to correct plan deficiencies and achieve required capabilities.
2. Provides for periodic organizational assessments to ensure effectiveness and ongoing compliance with emergency management performance standards.
3. Assists local officials by providing a baseline for orientation and focus for priorities.
4. Assists in raising the level of professionalism and communication within the organization and, ultimately, within the emergency management profession.
5. Allows for assessment of the status of local and state emergency management partnership.
6. Provides for a local viewpoint on emergency management capabilities and trends that constitute the emergency management baseline.
7. Provides a foundation for the assessment of emergency management standards and emergency management accreditation.
8. Allows for review of operational readiness before hazards, natural or man-made, impact a jurisdiction's ability to assist in building disaster resistant communities.
9. Changes the emergency management tradition from one that reactively responds to disasters to one that proactively helps communities and citizens avoid becoming disaster victims.

LCAR PROCESS

The LCAR questions are organized into the 13 Emergency Management Functions (EMFs) shown below:

- #1 Laws and Authorities
- #2 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
- #3 Hazard Mitigation
- #4 Resource Management
- #5 Planning
- #6 Direction, Control, and Coordination
- #7 Communications and Warning
- #8 Operations and Procedures
- #9 Logistics and Facilities
- #10 Training
- #11 Exercises, Evaluations, and Corrective Actions
- #12 Crisis Communications, Public Education, and Information
- #13 Finance and Administration

Since the LCAR is a self-assessment, decisions lie with the local jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions choose a team of key people in each functional area to assist in the assessment process. Jurisdictions review the assessment tool together and score their areas of expertise. Following the assessment process, the jurisdiction reviews the findings and develops a strategy for enhancing their overall preparedness, including areas of improvement. The State does not override the LCAR assessment. The State is there to help local jurisdictions get feedback and arrive at consensus answers.

Scoring of the 13 EMF's is based on a numerical scale of 1 to 5.

- 5 – Fully Capable
- 4 – Very Capable
- 3 – Generally Capable
- 2 – Marginally Capable
- 1 – Not Capable
- N/A = Not Applicable

Summary

The average score of 4.12 in the *Laws and Authorities* function indicates a high level of capability has been attained, and only a limited effort is required to reach full capability. The average score of 2.49 to 3.52 in the remaining 12 EMF's indicates progress has been achieved and a baseline capability has been developed, but significant effort is required to reach full capability (see Summary of Local Self Assessments Chart attachment).

Average jurisdiction scores may vary for a number of reasons, to include, but not limited to:

- Personnel
- Equipment
- Funds Availability
- Hazard Vulnerability

- Geography
- Population

Additional information on the LCAR process may be obtained by contacting VDEM's Local Planning Assistance Branch at 804-897-6500, extension 6524 or by visiting the website at www.vaemergency.com.

References

Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Law of 2000, as amended
Local Capability Assessment for Readiness (LCAR), Unabridged Instrument
Guidebook, FEMA, December 2001, F/1202

MMC/jwc
January 9, 2005

Attachment 1

Virginia Department of Emergency Management Summary of Local Self Assessments

Emergency Management Functions

