



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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November 7, 2013

Memorandum:

To: The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell, Governor
Members of the General Assembly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael M. Cline".

From: Michael M. Cline

Subject: Annual Statewide Drill on Response to Large Scale Disaster Report – FY2012

Attached is the report required by the *Code of Virginia*, §44-146.17:2 - "Annual Statewide Drill." Submitted in the form of an Executive Summary, the report documents the overall operational and program requirements essential to examine or test the Commonwealth's response to major disasters.

The annual Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise (VERTEX) series is intended to prepare the Commonwealth of Virginia for potential threats by measuring current capabilities, policies, and procedures against the requirements to properly mitigate, respond to, and recover from man-made and natural disasters impacting the Commonwealth.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact me.

MMC/bcf

Cc: The Honorable Bryan Rhode, Secretary of Public Safety
Jack E. King, Chief Deputy State Coordinator
Brett A. Burdick, Deputy State Coordinator
Susan Mongold, Division Director, Office of Training and Exercises

"Working to Protect People, Property and Our Communities"

2013 Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise Series

Executive Summary
Prepared for the General Assembly



Publication Date: October 30, 2013

Abstract: This document contains an overview of exercise discussions that took place during the 2013 Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise (VERTEX) series activities, to include scenario details, exercise objectives and agency participation.

ADMINISTRATIVE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

The title of this document is the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) 2013 Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise (VERTEX) After-Action Report.

For more information about this exercise, consult the following points of contact:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The annual Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise (VERTEX) series is intended to Prepare the Commonwealth of Virginia for potential threats by measuring current capabilities, policies, and procedures against the requirements to properly mitigate, respond to, and recover from man-made and natural disasters impacting the Commonwealth. In 2013, VERTEX was a three-part exercise series focusing on State preparedness in the core capabilities areas of critical transportation, operational coordination, operational communication, mass care and public/private services and resources.

The overarching purpose of the 2013 VERTEX series was to test the plan to respond to a large scale event, exercising response operations, traffic management and mass care operations as well electrical power and communications systems. This was done through definition of the threat, identification of vulnerable sectors and

processes, assessment of impacts and evaluation of potential countermeasures, in accordance with Virginia Code § 44-146.17:2. The purpose of the Recovery and Restoration Workshop was to provide learn from the recovery lesson from Hurricane Sandy and apply those lessons to Virginia.

MAJOR SERIES STRENGTHS	SERIES AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<i>The major power and communication providers have a defined and rehearsed plan for restoration and recovery from power outages and the coordination of restoration activities between sectors.</i>	<i>Engage all power providers to plan for improved communication and coordination between the entire sector and the Emergency Operations Center during a response.</i>
<i>The Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) maintained situational awareness via the rapid collection, analysis, and dissemination of information and intelligence throughout the exercise.</i>	<i>Continue the training for local and state personnel on the use of situational awareness tools and WebEOC as well as VERT operations.</i>
<i>State management shelter on-site Operations Section Chiefs were prepared to coordinate resources effectively, to organize the staging for the shelter and to conduct regular situation briefings.</i>	<i>Continued training is needed for shelter staff in regards to registration procedures, site set-up, resource management and familiarity with communication equipment.</i>
<i>Communication across the Virginia State Police was well coordinated and any interagency communication issues were quickly rectified.</i>	<i>Improve radio communication between VSP and VDOT by addressing technical radio issues and annually training/testing the Communications 205 plan.</i>

SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

In 2013, VERTEX was a three-part exercise series focusing on State preparedness in the core capabilities areas of critical transportation, operational coordination, operational communication, mass care and public/private services and resources. Scenarios varied for the exercises based on the regional participation priority threats.

Restoration and Recovery Workshop

This workshop focused on real world response to Hurricane Sandy. The major power and communications companies from New York and New Jersey shared with the VERT and Virginia's power and communications companies their lessons learned based on planning, response and communication during and after a catastrophic disaster.

EOC Activation Drill and Shelter Full Scale

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) VERTEX 2013 was designed to establish a learning environment for players to exercise emergency response plans, policies, and procedures as they pertain to response and recovery from multiple threats and hazards associated with a major earthquake. The purpose of VERTEX 2013 was to conduct a series of exercises of varying degrees of complexity that engage the "Whole Community" within the Commonwealth in responding to and recovering from multiple threats and hazards.

It was agreed by the planning committee that the best means to this end was to conduct a series of operations-based exercises, to run for six hours on each of two consecutive days, addressing the immediate aftermath of a 6.8 Magnitude earthquake. The design for the first day included a six-hour State Level Functional Exercise that would run concurrently with a VDEM Region 3 Functional Exercise focusing on Emergency Operations Center operations in response to the same scenario. The second day of the exercise included a six-hour full-scale exercise of multiple capability field deployments and operations including State Managed Shelter (SMS) and National Guard operations and continued functional play at the VEOC. Response actions exercised included fire response management, law enforcement, health assessments, search and rescue, triage, treatment, hazard identification, site security and crowd control, emergency medical services, medical treatment at local hospitals, risk communications, and mass sheltering.

I-64 Lane Reversal

The purpose of the 2013 Lane Reversal Exercise is to conduct a Rehearsal of Concept Exercise that engages all supporting agencies in a command and control environment, with operations at specified gates, to assess the initiation, implementation, and demobilization of the Lane Reversal Plan. The scenario used to trigger the need for an evacuation of low lying areas of the Hampton Roads region were a Category 3 hurricane predicted to make landfall in the eastern side of Virginia in 36 hours. The exercise is initiated because the Governor has just issued the order to authorize the lane reversal to begin evacuation of the Hampton Roads region.

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SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Details

Exercise Name

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) 2013 Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise (VERTEX) Series

Type of Exercises

Discussion Based (Workshop) and Operations Based (Drill and Full Scale)

Exercise Location and Dates

Power Restoration and Recover Workshop - Richmond – April 3, 2013

EOC Activation Drill – Richmond, VDEM Regions 3 and 5 – May 21, 2013

Shelter Full Scale – Richmond, VDEM Regions 3 and 5 – May 22, 2013

I-64 Lane Reversal Full Scale – Richmond, VDEM Regions 1 and 5 – July 21, 2013

Duration

Restoration and Recover workshop – 3 hours

EOC Activation Drill – 6 hours

Shelter Full Scale – 5 hours

I-64 Lane Reversal Full Scale – 1 hour

Sponsor

VDEM

Program

Fiscal Year 2012 State Homeland Security Grant Program

Mission

Prepare, Respond, Recover

Core Capabilities

Operational Communications and Coordination

Situational Assessment

Public Information and Warning

Mass Care

Public and Private Services and Resources

Scenario Type

A large-scale event, exercising response operations, traffic management and mass care operations, as well electrical power and communications systems.

Number of Attendees

Restoration and Recover workshop – 40 participants

EOC Activation Drill – 262 participants

Shelter Full Scale – 262 participants

I-64 Lane Reversal – 200 participants

Participating Organizations

The following Federal, State, and local agencies attended the 2013 VERTEX Exercise Series:

Federal Agencies/Private Non-Profits	State Agencies	Localities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEMA Region 3 Incident Management Team • Virginia Horse Center • Rockingham Memorial Hospital • Rockingham Animal Shelter • Verizon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Department of Emergency Management • Christopher Newport University • Virginia Military Institute • James Madison University • State Corporation Commission • Virginia Army National Guard • Virginia Fusion Center • Virginia State Police • Virginia Department of Aviation • Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Disability Services • Virginia Department of Emergency Management • Virginia Department of Fire Programs • Virginia Department of Transportation • Virginia Department of Military Affairs • Virginia Department of Health • Virginia Department of Social Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albemarle County • Buckingham County • City of Charlottesville • City of Harrisonburg • City of Virginia Beach • Halifax County • Henrico County • James City County • Lunenburg County • New Kent County • Rockingham County • Town of South Boston

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SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

Exercise Purpose and Design

The overarching purpose of the 2013 VERTEX series was to test the plan to respond to a large scale event, exercising response operations, traffic management and mass care operations as well electrical power and communications systems. This was done through definition of the threat, identification of vulnerable sectors and processes, assessment of impacts and evaluation of potential countermeasures, in accordance with Virginia Code § 44-146.17:2. The purpose of the Recovery and Restoration Workshop was to provide learn from the recovery lesson from Hurricane Sandy and apply those lessons to Virginia.

Exercise Major Objectives

Exercise	Major Objectives
Recovery and Restoration Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply lessons learned by major power and communications sectors in New Jersey and New York on responding to a catastrophic disaster (Hurricane Sandy)
EOC Activation Drill and Shelter Full Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the ability of the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) to collect, process, and act upon incident specific information within the first 24 hours of the event in accordance with the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP). <i>Day 1 FE, Situational Assessment.</i> Evaluate the ability of the Joint Information Center to deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible and culturally/linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding the threat and assistance being made available in accordance with ESF #15 Annex of the COVEOP. <i>Day 1 FE and Day 2 FSE, Public Information and Warning.</i> Evaluate the ability of the VEOC, VERT, and Regional locality agencies to establish and maintain a unified and/or coordinated operational structure that integrates stakeholders and supports the execution of incident objectives in accordance with the Basic Plan of the COVEOP and local Emergency Operations Plans. <i>Day 1 FE and Day 2 FSE, Operational Coordination; Day 2 FSE, Mass Care Services.</i>
I-64 Lane Reversal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the initiation, implementation, and support of the I-64 lane reversal during an active hurricane, prior landfall, in accordance with the respective agencies Lane Reversal Plans. Assess Command and Control interagency coordination and communications during the lane reversal according to the Lane Reversal and Communications Plans.

Exercise Summaries

Recovery and Restoration Workshop

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) conducted the VERTEX 2013 Recovery and Restoration Workshop on April 3, 2013. The purpose of this workshop was to learn from the after action analysis from New York and New Jersey’s major power and communication sectors in order to apply those lessons learned within Virginia. With 40 representatives of the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) state agencies and private sector power and communication companies in attendance, the discussion focused on the key elements of planning, prepositioning of resources, and management of long term recovery operations from both a staffing and housing perspective.

Through this workshop the VERT was able to identify business process improvement needs and to develop education and information sharing opportunities for the sectors to work closer with local emergency management. Initial plans for improvement across the VERT and Virginia’s power and communication sectors include involving all power and communications companies in discussions and training on situational awareness information sharing and response efforts during a disaster.

EOC Activation Drill and Shelter Full Scale

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) conducted the VERTEX 2013 on May 21-22, 2013. The purpose of VERTEX 2013 was to conduct a series of exercises of varying degrees of complexity that engaged the “Whole Community” with the Commonwealth; sufficient to respond and recover from multiple threats and hazards.

On Tuesday, May 21, 2013, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) conducted a six-hour Functional Exercise (FE) for the Virginia Emergency Response Team and eight VDEM Region 3 localities and agencies, and on Wednesday, May 22, 2013, a five-hour Full Scale Exercise (FSE) for State Managed Shelter (SMS) supporting agencies at two shelter locations. The FE began at 9:00 a.m. and concluded at 3:00 p.m. on the first day. The FSE began at 9:30 a.m. and concluded at 2:30 p.m. the following day. The purpose of VERTEX 2013 was to conduct a series of exercises of varying degrees of complexity that engaged the “Whole Community” with the Commonwealth; sufficient to respond and recover from multiple threats and hazards. VERTEX 2013 was an operations-based exercise in response to a 6.8 Magnitude earthquake, subsequent 5.7 Magnitude aftershock, and precipitating cascading incidents.

The evaluated National Preparedness Goal (NPG) Response Mission Area Core Capabilities chosen by the Exercise Planning Team consisted of the following:

- Situational Assessment
- Public Information and Warning
- Operational Coordination
- Mass Care
- Operational Communications

Based on these core capabilities, the Exercise Planning Team (EPT) developed the following exercise-specific objectives for exercise participant evaluation guidance:

- Evaluate the ability of the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) to collect, process, and act upon incident specific information within the first 24 hours of the event in accordance with the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP). *Day 1 FE, Situational Assessment.*
- Evaluate the ability of the Joint Information Center to deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible and culturally/linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding the threat and assistance being made available in accordance with ESF #15 Annex of the COVEOP. *Day 1 FE and Day 2 FSE, Public Information and Warning.*
- Evaluate the ability of the JIC to monitor social media and direct emergency management request to appropriate channels and develop situational awareness with damage reports. *Day 1 FE and Day 2 FSE, Public Information and Warning.*
- Evaluate the ability of the VEOC, VERT, and Regional locality agencies to establish and maintain a unified and/or coordinated operational structure that integrates stakeholders and supports the execution of incident objectives in accordance with the Basic Plan of the COVEOP and local Emergency Operations Plans. *Day 1 FE and Day 2 FSE, Operational Coordination; Day 2 FSE, Mass Care Services.*
- Demonstrate the ability of Region 3 partners to establish/re-establish interoperable voice and data communications in support of situational awareness and operations by any and all means available among and between the impacted communications and response community in accordance with existing polices plans and procedures. *Day 1 FE, Operational Communications.*

VERTEX 2013 successfully tested and validated the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP) including its ESF #15 Annex, local Emergency Operations Plans, State-Managed Shelter Plans and procedures, and local plans and procedures for the establishment and re-establishment of interoperable voice and data communications in response to a complex, multi-faceted emergency. This AAR is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the planning team and participants to work together to overcome obstacles and reach a common goal in emergency response and management. The exercise provided key insights into the functionality of State and Local emergency operations plans and identified both strengths and areas for improvement involving the whole community in emergency response and recovery.

I-64 Lane Reversal

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) conducted a 1 hour Rehearsal of Concept Exercise (ROC) on Sunday, July 21, for agencies responsible for Lane Reversal;

Virginia State Police, Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia National Guard, and Virginia Department of Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services. The purpose of the 2013 Lane Reversal Exercise is to conduct a Rehearsal of Concept Exercise that engages all supporting agencies in a command and control environment, with operations at specified gates, to assess the initiation, implementation, and demobilization of the Lane Reversal Plan.

The ROC was conducted on Interstate 64, with the majority in New Kent County and one exit in James City County. The Command Post was at Exit 200, and the gates tested were at Exits 205, 211, 214, 220, 227 and 214. As a safety measure, traffic was routed off at Exit 205 and routed on at Exit 231. Lieutenant Colonel Eugene A. Stockton with Virginia State Police served as the exercise director.

The exercise was designed to test the closure and sweep of the highway, and to test the command and control function. The participants included staff at each exit gate from VSP, VDOT, and NG. At the command post participants included VSP, VDOT, NG, and OCME.

Based on the Exercise Planning Team's deliberations, two Core Capabilities were chosen as the foundation for the exercise. Based on the two Core Capabilities, Operational Communication and Operational Coordination the objectives for the exercise were as follows:

- Evaluate the initiation, implementation, and support of the I-64 lane reversal during an active hurricane, prior to landfall, in accordance with the respective agencies Lane Reversal Plans.
- Assess Command and Control interagency coordination and communications during the lane reversal according to the Lane Reversal and Communications Plans.

Overall, the 2013 I-64 Lane Reversal Rehearsal of Concept Exercise proved to be successful. There was great participation among several agencies and the function of the gates and highway sweep functioned as envisioned despite a vehicle getting onto the closed highway. The overall goal of this exercise was to test command and control functions as well as operations at each exit. Participants were able to accomplish these tasks and identify strengths and areas of improvement. As a result of this exercise, actions can be taken to improve and/or update the plans and procedures to reverse traffic on Interstate 64 for evacuation purposes.