

Bulletin

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS

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IAEM Bulletin

Call for Articles:

**"The Stakes Are High for
 Emergency Managers:
 Financial Impacts"**

Deadline: June 10, 2011

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IAEM: Working for You

■ **IAEM-Global Total Membership Approaches 5,000.** Business Director Russ Decker, CEM, reports that total IAEM-Global membership now approaches 5,000, while IAEM-USA membership is more than 4,000. Read his report on Page 5.

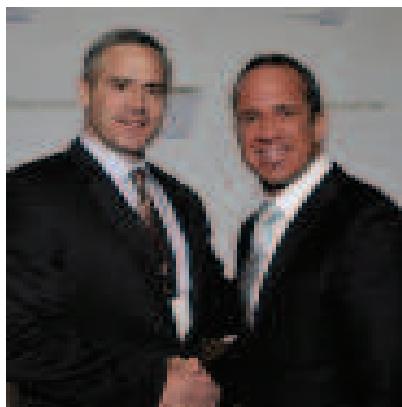
■ **IAEM Scholarship Applications Now Being Accepted.** The IAEM 2011 Scholarship application form is available for download at www.iaem.com/resources/scholarships/application.htm. The deadline for applications in this competitive program is **May 13, 2011**.

■ **IAEM-Global 2011 Awards Competition Opening Soon.** The call for entries in the IAEM-Global 2011 Awards Competition will be published online around **May 10, 2011**. Watch for an IAEM member email announcement, or check www.iaem.com/Awards.

■ **EMEX 2010 Receives Top 50 Award from Trade Show Executive.** The Emergency Management & Homeland Security Expo (EMEX), the annual expo of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), was honored by *Trade Show Executive* magazine as one of the 50 fastest-growing shows in the United States in 2010. The prestigious award was announced at *Trade Show Executive's* "Fastest 50 Awards Gala & Summit" at Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, Fla, Mar. 9-11, 2011.

The award was accepted by Clay D. Tyeryar, MAM, CAE, IAEM Deputy Executive Director and EMEX Exhibit Manager. "EMEX brings together emergency management, security, crisis management, business continuity

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IAEM's EMEX 2010 (Emergency Management & Homeland Security Expo) Wins Award for Being One of the Top 50 Fastest-Growing Shows in the United States. IAEM Deputy Executive Director Clay Tyeryar, MAM, CAE (left), and EMEX contractor representative Marco Parrotto accepted the award on behalf of IAEM.



IAEM-USA Leaders Met with Craig Fugate Mar. 21 to Discuss Congressional Issues and FEMA Initiatives Related to Local EM.

Left to right: IAEM-USA 1st Vice President Hui-Shan Walker, CEM, Deputy Coordinator Emergency Services, Office of Emergency Management, City of Chesapeake, Va.; FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate; IAEM-USA President Eddie Hicks, CEM, Director of Emergency Management, Morgan County, Ala.; and IAEM-USA Government Affairs Chair Randy Duncan, CEM, Director of Emergency Management, Segwick County, Ks.

The Safety Element in Managing Risks Associated with Volunteers

By Wayne Spivak, President, SBA Consulting, Ltd., Bellmore, New York

Risk management is a logical process or approach that seeks to eliminate or at least minimize the level of risk associated with a business operation. Essentially, the process identifies any type of situation that could result in damage to any resource within the possession of the company, including personnel, then takes steps to correct factors that are highly likely to result in that damage.¹

In the emergency management industry today, volunteers and volunteer organizations still play a major role in the planning and delivery of services. Volunteers by their very nature are drawn to an organization based on its mission, its placement in the industry, and their ability to help. Key to the recruitment and retention of the volunteer is that they can perform the roles to which they aspire.

Many organizations have internalized an educational or training system to help manage some of the risk associated with liability for the services that are provided to the end user, but that is only one aspect of risk management.

In emergency management, one of the first rules it to make sure that your people are not exposed to undue risk. One of the major command functions, and one that requires a high level of professionalism and experience to fill at an event where ICS has been instituted, is the Safety Officer.

We Need to Look Inward

Emergency work can be, is, and will always be dangerous. Danger comes in many forms, from simple cuts to death due to a whole host of predictable and non-predictable hazards. Many programs already

have built in safety features that try to mitigate predictable and non-predictable hazards. The “10-second survey” I learned many years ago in my first EMT course is a classic example.

That concept, built on the motto of “fools rush in where angels fear to tread,” served many an EMT from tunnel vision during the mad dash from the ambulance to a dangerous situation. Safety courses try to convey the need to think outside the proverbial bubble, try to ascertain what might go wrong, and avoid that hazard.

All these programs are both commendable and successful. But all are missing an important safety element. This single element is one that ultimately causes LOD announcements every day. The element is missing from conversations between volunteers and conversations that their agencies don't want to talk about, but is essential to risk management.

Physical Fitness and the Ability to Act

Many volunteer emergency management groups have demanding physical and/or psychological aspects. Whether you're a volunteer CERT member, firefighter, auxiliary police officer or Coast Guard Auxiliarist, each job can be both physical and stressful.

However, many of these same volunteer jobs require no initial or ongoing physical and medical exam. People, especially in emergency services don't like talking about their own physical or psychological problems, and definitely not mortality. Every day we receive reports of volunteers dying from heart attacks, strokes, lung cancer and a host of other diseases that are either a by-product of unhealthy job-related

functions and/or the result of the pressures of the job.

Risk Management

What does it take to encourage volunteers to undergo a physical exam to prove they are physically fit to undertake the job that they wish to perform? Many times, recertification tests knowledge, but does not address the physicality of a job.

To manage the risks inherent in emergency management, agencies should require recertification of the physical attributes associated with the job qualifications, the knowledge required to perform the job, and an adequate medical screening to warn both volunteer and agency about negative health predictors.

The response to this change of behavior on the part of the volunteer agencies won't be pretty. Volunteers will take offense. They will claim that they were valued fit yesterday but not today. But in the end, volunteers who die because of preventable and treatable conditions do themselves, their families, and the agencies and communities they serve no service at all.

Conclusion

In fact, those who refuse to show they are healthy enough to undertake the roles to which they aspire do a disservice, and this disservice flies in the face of what emergency management is all about, identifying hazards and mitigating them. Prepare for the worst, respond when necessary, and help with recovery.

¹ <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-risk-management.htm>