



Leading the Way

in Emergency Management for the Transportation Sector



The WebEOC® ST Difference

WebEOC ST is the world's first Web-based emergency management communications system for the transit sector. Now you can prepare, coordinate, respond, and recover faster and with unmatched insight to any transportation emergency.

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On these pages you will find a sampling of viewpoints from some of our advertisers on the importance of safety and security in the public transportation industry.

Latest Technologies to Support Emergency Operations Management

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WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, PUBLIC AGENCIES, FIRST RESPONDER teams, emergency operations centers (EOCs), and corporate safety managers have two things in common: they need to react fast and respond effectively. Unfortunately, as we have seen in countless crises throughout the world in recent years, although they often react quickly, their effectiveness is jeopardized by their inability to coordinate and act upon relevant information in real time.

Indeed, a well-coordinated, immediate flow of information among all response teams is critical to minimize any additional loss of life, costly damage to private and public property, and even lawsuits that may ensue after the event. But the question remains: How, exactly, do you do it? With so many parties involved, is it possible to streamline and coordinate information, communication, resources, and documentation during a catastrophe event?

The answer is an unequivocal “yes,” and it comes in the form of Crisis Information Management Software (CIMS). Web-based emergency management communication systems can share real-time emergency information with public agencies, businesses, EOCs, and first responders.

CIMS is an invaluable tool that saves valuable time during emergency operations by rapidly coordinating, managing, and relaying vital information from a central location or remote sites to allow the efficient access and quick deployment of emergency resources. This enhances situational awareness and enables decision makers to work together on grids rather than operate in silos relying on their own limited information.

The old adage, “Knowledge is power,” takes on new meaning during a crisis when, through the use of a centralized online application, EOCs, control centers, and first responders can immediately access the same data to quickly analyze, coordinate, and distribute essential information to everyone involved with the rescue and

recovery efforts.

The advantages of web-based emergency management communications systems are numerous, but let’s examine just a few of the benefits of automation:

- **Improve information management.** Take a wide range of transit-related information from a variety of sources and organize it into a common web-based location that allows everyone responding to the crisis to collectively see, share, and act on the same relevant information at the same time. In addition to eliminating confusion, typically a huge factor in emergency response, receiving and responding to accurate information in real time saves time, money and, most importantly, lives.
- **Coordinate resources more effectively.** Link local, state, federal, volunteer, private, and worldwide resources to make better-informed decisions. Instead of operating independently, all emergency response personnel can easily work together to speed up recovery efforts and resolve the crisis far more rapidly than they would have otherwise.
- **Use online documentation instead of paper.** Eliminate manual processes and paper-based forms with a web-based solution that uses electronic status boards and online forms to drastically increase response times on the scene.
- **Save time and money on world-class training.** Of course, before they’re ready to respond to a disaster, all emergency response personnel must be expertly trained. Web-based tools make this process easier and more efficient by providing modules that support “tabletop” (mock) exercises of emergency situations. Since the training is online, users can be down the hall or on the other side of the world. Either way, emergency responders get best-in-class training at a fraction of the cost and time as traditional training methods.

The bottom line? Crisis Information Management Software is the most successful way to coordinate and respond to any emergency. By coordinating information, resources, communication, documentation, and training, these online systems are saving lives, money, and time every day.

Transit Employees Important to Security

many U.S. transit systems have invested heavily in developing new or upgrading existing electronic surveillance and security systems. In addition, transit officials increasingly realize that their front-line employees (conductors, drivers, porters, etc.) are the “eyes and ears” of the systems in which they work and that these personnel play a critical role in preventing incidents, as well as serving as potential first responders during a terrorist attack.

Because many transit agencies operate across municipal boundaries, front-line employees may find themselves in the position of coordinating or participating in emergency response activities involving several jurisdictions, regions, or states. Recognizing the expanding role of transit employees, organizations such as APTA, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and the federal Transportation Security Administration stress the importance of providing awareness training so employees can learn to more effectively observe and report suspicious activity or incidents that may pose a security risk. These training programs focus on providing employees with the basic tools and knowledge of where to look, what to look for, and what to report regarding a potential terrorist threat.

At the forefront of this training effort, Amtrak began an aggressive program in 2007 to provide all 12,000 of its operations employees (personnel working on trains and in rail yards) with security awareness training. This training would help them better understand threats to America’s rail systems; recognize possible weapons; identify suspicious

activities/behaviors; and define their individual roles and responsibilities in helping reduce the risk of a terrorist attack targeting Amtrak trains and operations. In addition to classroom training, participants handled “mockup” packages and devices terrorists might use to attack a train or passenger area— helping to heighten employee awareness about the possible threat posed by seemingly harmless packages or luggage.

Since beginning the program, Amtrak continues to participate in emergency preparedness exercises to evaluate the effectiveness of its emergency plans, policies, and procedures to assess the need for enhanced or new emergency training. Preparing for and responding to terrorism is a significant challenge. And although many transit agencies, like Amtrak, are assuming a larger role in both terrorism mitigation and response efforts, of the approximately 500 transit agencies in this country, fewer than 100 have formal transit police or security departments to direct counterterrorism initiatives.

Thus, there is no doubt that each transit employee plays a vital role in ensuring passenger safety and security.

However, as long as terrorism remains a high-consequence event, it would be foolhardy not to train and prepare for the potentially catastrophic results of a terrorist attack on a bus, train, major rail hub, or single station.